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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

UNVARNISHED FACTS

— AND —

UNVARNISHED YARNS

— OF —

UNVARNISHED DRY GOODS MEN.

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BY ALBERT E. HILES.

LOS ANGELES, CAL.:

1889.

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SUB TITLES.

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PAGE.

A Few Remarks 3
Mr. Soakum's Scheme 11
Mr. Pippin Wasteth Much Money and Affection 19
Not in the Church of England Service 48
A Discussion Produces Many Unvarnished Facts and Unvarnished Yarns 56
Tongues Have They But Speak Not 72
The Major Joins the Army Before He Expected To, and Also Brings About a Much Needed Reform 84
Dining Off Boiled Baby for Six Weeks 95
Why a London Draper Passed as an American Citizen. 108
Some Employers Rob Their Salespeople, Who in Turn Get Even on The Customers 149
One of the Most Unvarnished Yarns in the Trade 159
Another 165
Cranks and Shoppers—Lo! The Woods Are Full of 'Em. 173
Women Who Lessen the Chances of Dry-Goods Men Ever Seeing the Inside of Heaven. 184

A Few Remarks.

It has been truly said that one-half of the world knows not how the other half lives.

In the following pages I have endeavored, in a slight measure, to show to the public some of the evils existing behind the scenes of the great London drapery establishments, and mammoth dry goods stores of America. This is a business which appears to the casual observer—as at one time it did to me—to be one of the most pleasant anyone could possibly engage in. Twenty years' experience, however, has served to dispel the illusion; for what I, in common with so many others, had once supposed to be an easy and light occupation, has, in these years, proved to be one of most peculiarly trying hardships.

Did it ever strike you when upon entering one of our great London shops, that the army of well-dressed, smiling and happy looking salespeople were anything but what they appeared ?

With very few exceptions I venture to say it did not: for not only is this an age of appearances, but the London assistant has yet to be found parading the evils and wrongs existing behind the scenes of his business life before the eyes of the public.

Reader, if you be a father having sons and daughters old enough to go into business, and have a sincere wish for their future happiness, don't let them see the inside of a draper's shop. But if your circumstances are such that they compel you as a last resource to put your boys to this infernal busi-

ness, take the advice of one who has been through the fire, and got severely scorched, "DON'T APPRENTICE THEM IN LONDON."

You, nor anyone else, can imagine the temptations that beset them, or the utter loneliness of their positions in this great world. Here they are at a weak age suddenly torn from the tender care of a mother, and knowing nothing of the world, outside of the provincial town they were reared in, thrown among the millions already there fighting for a—— "an existence," I had almost said "a living;" but you will believe me when I assert that there are to-day, were yesterday, and always will be, thousands of wretched people in our great metropolis who *do not "live;"* hence the word "*existence*" in a place I would have been only to happy to fill with "live."

Don't do it, I say; I have been through the mill, and know whereof I speak. If you live in a country town, and must put your boy in the "rag trade," apprentice him where you, or some of his friends, can keep a watchful eye upon him.

How well do I remember being left alone for the first time in this great city of "poverty and wealth," of "sin and godliness," of "gin palaces and churches," of "foul things and clean things," of "low music halls," and "elevating lecture rooms," of "stifling bar-rooms," and "splendid parks," and in short, "everything bad," and "everything good." Although since then I have been kicked about the world so much, that it no longer contains a stranger for me, I cannot efface from my memory the misery I first endured in that city with its crowding millions, not a soul of whom did I know.

There was no one to care for me, no one to point out the right road for me to travel, no one to correct me when I erred; but on the contrary, many to pat me on the back and call me a brick when I did wrong, and the greater the wrong, the more the patting. Under these circumstances—which may be met with in hundreds of houses, other than the one in which I was apprenticed—was it any wonder that I fell into the road I found the rest of my fellow apprentices traversing? No; why should I go into a house, and being the youngest in it, take upon myself the presumptuous task of constructing a new and separate path for myself? Certainly what had served the thousands preceding me, should also be good enough for me; and so it goes on, a youth serves his time, and another fills the vacancy arising; and he being of an age at which a boy would rather do wrong and get called a brick, than do right and get sneered at, it is natural for him to take his first walks upon the most pleasant highway, and the first thing he knows, he has gone so far along it, that the entrance is clear out of sight, and to think of turning back is useless.

The narrative of the luckless "Pippin," related by Mr. Bright, is an apt illustration of how soon a boy in one of these London houses becomes a confirmed liar, and ever willing to execute some wicked scheme. Mr. Bright tells us he had been in the trade just "one year," and yet, before he concludes his yarn, he becomes a *self-confessed hardened liar*.

Discarding all ideas of literary excellence, I have as nearly as possible produced the yarns found in the following pages in the language of those originally telling them. When I say as nearly as possible—as the reader will be very likely

to guess, if he has an extensive acquaintance among the class of men contributing them—I mean, I have shorn them of some of the "Latin terms," the average salesman has such a great command of when spinning a yarn.

If by chance any of the characters delineated should bear a resemblance to you; or if any of the narratives contain anything pointing your way, I offer no apology; for it is you more than another whom I wish to reach. Should you happen to be a London employer, conscious of not providing your assistants with proper food and lodging; or if you have been guilty of swelling your income by deducting fines, etc., from their meagre earnings, and then sought to lessen the enormity of your offence, by saying these amounts are required to keep up the "library, etc.," you had better close this book without further perusal of its pages; for possessing the tender feelings invariably belonging to your class, it is possible for them to be wounded by some of the "unvarnished facts" herein related.

If you be an American woman, described by one of the narratives as "A SHOPPER," you also had better go no further into these pages; and yet after all I hope you will, for who can tell but what some good may be wrought by so doing? It is possible that you may have never given the matter any serious thought, and have grown up in the belief that the dry-goods stores of the town in which you live are SO MANY "BAZAAR'S," placed there for your amusement, and as a means of killing time, and you have a perfect right to use them and the clerks employed therein in this manner. If you have such ideas, discard them at once, for they are erroneous, and in many instances the practicing of them has cost a poor clerk his or her position.

I once knew a case resulting in this disastrous manner. A woman entered a store and began to look at goods, and at the end of an hour had purchased nothing, as she was rising from her seat, the clerk expressed his regrets at not being able to please her. Oh! but you have *pleased* me, quoth the lady; I had to wait about an hour for my train to go out, so I thought I would just drop in and see what you had. Oh! yes you have *pleased* me very well indeed; much obliged, good morning, and the next minute left the store. Five minutes afterwards the clerk with two days salary in his pocket did the same thing.

Now I am unwilling to believe that any lady, either English or American, has any wish to throw one of so needy a class out of employment, even though the situation be, as it often is, one from which barely enough is derived to keep body and soul from dissolving partnership, therefore to the American lady I would most earnestly say "DON'T SHOP." If you have an intention of purchasing something in the near future, and wish to know what is obtainable in this line, go into a store and say so, tell the clerk you do not wish to purchase today, but you would like to see what he has. If you do this, you will find it will have a most pleasing effect, for the salesman struck by your candor—everybody admires candor—will take three times as much trouble in order to make a favorable impression.

But if, on the other hand, you bounce into a store and let on you want to buy "God's footstool," *you will only do it once*; for, mark my words, from that day forth you are "spotted," and as much as possible *avoided*. If you do not believe what I say, go and try both methods, and see which

pays best; and you, my countrywomen, whom I hold and revere above all others—and I have seen and known many others—to you I would say, do not suppose for one instant, that the neat and invariably pleasant assistants that wait upon you in our great London shops, travel a path bestrewn entirely with roses. Oh, no; it is true, you are very seldom allowed to witness any of the miseries they have to endure—and endure in silence too—but still they exist, and exist to a most alarming extent.

What would you say, do, or think, if by chance you entered one of these establishments in which you had a daughter employed, and found that daughter in tears, called forth by a torrent of oaths and imprecations from the lips of a brutal employer or manager?

"Oh," I fancy I hear you say, "but surely there are no men who so far forget themselves as to curse and swear at defenseless young girls?"

Oh yes there are, and most emphatically I assert it; *for have I not seen them with mine own eyes? and shall I not believe what I have seen?*

Think of it; imagine if you can, a young and delicate girl working from twelve o'clock dinner time, till eleven o'clock of a Saturday night, with nothing past her lips but a slice of bread and butter and a cup of weak tea; weary and faint, and almost ready to drop, she asks permission to go to supper, and gets for an answer:

"Supper be damned! Go and attend to my customers. Dont talk to me about supper."

I HAVE WITNESSED THIS!

And you, young man, what would you do if you went into

an establishment which numbered a beloved sister of yours among it's employés, and found there a man—or rather A DEVIL—breathing into her ears villainy, which, if he heard applied to his own sister, wretch though he be, he would not hesitate to strike the one using it to the ground? And yet, *I have heard these things with mine own ears, and shall I not believe what I have heard?*

American mothers need not turn up their eyes in holy horror at this, and pharisaically exclaim: "Thank God we have none of these things;" FOR YOU HAVE! And what else can you expect, when thousands of girls in your large cities are employed at salaries of *three*, *four* and *five dollars* a week?"

Now, do you mean to tell me—in spite of all that has been written by "cranks," upon the subject of economical living—that a Chicago girl, for instance, can pay car-fare, and room rent, and *honestly* keep herself in food, clothes, medicine, and virtue, on a salary of three dollars a week?

I once heard a young and beautiful girl—who had spent some years in American drygoods stores, and had, therefore, an opportunity to see these things, say: "If I had a dozen daughters to provide for, and was seventy years old, *I would rather do scrubbing myself and see them scrub*, before I would allow one of them to enter this business."

"Why," I asked mechanically.

"If you were a married man I would tell you." And her answer, brief as it was, could not have been more complete and suggestive.

My God, parents, knowing these things will you continue to put your daughters into such a business?

In conclusion, I would say that, if I can, in a small degree, lighten the labors of my fellow-workers in a business with which I have long since grown disgusted, I shall feel that the number of years it has taken me to obtain the experience I am about to relate of life in the drygoods stores of America, and draper's shops of England, have not been altogether wasted. During these years I have come across many things to amuse, many to annoy, many to arouse indignation, many to cause the hot tears of misery and shame to be shed, many to quicken the beatings of the heart, many to almost make it stand still; many things degrading, many elevating, many rich women, many poor, many kind and thoughtful, many heartless, many in rags, many in silks, many in carriages, many barefooted, many haughty, many modest, many wishing to buy, many to look around and be amused, many lying about competitors' prices, many not knowing or caring for them. In short, I, in common with thousands of others, have come to the conclusion that the female character, not to be met with in this business, DOES NOT EXIST.

Mr. Soakum's Scheme.

Many years ago I was living in a London house employing about fifty men, forty, at least, of whom did not adorn the lapels of their coats with blue ribbon. Having finished our day's work we would on winter evenings repair to "a little pub around the corner," and take charge of the bar parlor until the time for closing our dormitories had nearly arrived. On these occasions we would indulge in a drink or two, or more, smoke our pipes, and like all draper's assistants, when they got together, tell yarns.

The jovial innkeeper, finding our visits were very frequent and regular, and certainly not unprofitable, surprised us one night by meeting us at the door, and conducting the whole of our prrty to a room upstairs, which he informed us had that day been specially prepared for our exclusive use. It was with no small degree of satisfaction we received this information from Mr. Soakum, for we had long ago found the conveniences offered by the bar-room below to be inadequate, to say nothing of the liability of being intruded upon by unwelcome patrons of the "Crown." Now, as this room was destined to become the place wherein most of the following incidents were related, a description of its chief features may not be out of place.

To begin with, its length could not be much less than forty feet, whilst its breadth would probably be about thirty; at each end a large and cheerful fire was burning in an open

grate; giving at once warmth and brightness to the surroundings. Over the centre of the floor were scattered Utrecht velvet-covered chairs of irregular sizes and shapes, and before each of these stood a small table, with a match-holder in the centre; underneath each of these tables was placed a spittoon filled with fresh sawdust. Along both sides of the room ran a platform about a foot high, supporting two rows of cane bottom chairs, the appearance of which the landlord accounted for by informing us that the room had once been used as a billiard parlor, but the same amount of amusement being offered for half the price at a neighboring coffee palace, he had been compelled to sell his tables and discharge the markers. Nothing else remains to be described, except it be that the whole room was richly carpeted.

The reason he had gone to such an expense in fitting up this room so comfortably, for what he declared our exclusive and special use, did not at once appear quite clear to us; and simultaneously half a dozen were asking Mr. Soakum for some enlightenment upon the matter.

"Well, gentlemen," stammered Mr. Soakum, "If you will be kind enough to be seated, and take a drink all around at the expense of the house, I will try to explain it to you."

These few words had scarcely left the lips of our worthy landlord, ere we found ourselves comfortably resting in the plush-covered couches, and each man had ordered his own particular drink.

Whilst the barman went below to procure them, Mr. Soakum, after clearing his throat, began by saying, "Well, gentlemen, I suppose you do think it a little strange that I should go to work and spend a great many pounds on this

here room, after having to sell all my billiard tables; but the fact is, gentlemen, I've got a scheme."

"A scheme," cried a dozen voices at once. "A scheme." "Let's hear it." "Come, what is it?" "Spit it out."

"Well, gentlemen, as I said before," proceeded Mr. Soakum in a more confiden tialtone, "I've got a 'scheme' and if I may make bold to broach it to you——"

Here arose a cry from all parts of the room of "Go on," "Go on," "Let's hear it," "Spit it out," etc.

When the noise had subsided, Mr. Soakum, feeling no doubt encouraged by the way he had been received, began again, "Well, gentleman, I've got a 'scheme,' and it is this: Last winter many I now see before me used to spend their evenings in my house. I am proud to be able to say it; my bar-parlor down-stairs used to be crowded every night, and I did my best to make them and their friends—who have since left this part of London—feel comfortable and at home. Many a winter night I have sat down and took a drink with them, and listened to and laughed at the yarns and tales that would be told by them. Great yarns they were, too, and my poor wife, who has since gone the way of all flesh, would laugh till she cried; and then cry herself so dry that a drink of gin and water—my wife never drank anything but gin and water—was needed to moisten her up again. Now it is these very yarns which you gentlemen tell in such great numbers and in such style that an old tar would turn green with envy if he should chance to hear them, that suggested this scheme to me. I have, as you see, furnished this room in a very comfortable manner; and it is capable of seating, with the chairs along the sides, at least a hundred

fellows. Now what I propose is, that you gentlemen form among yourselves some kind of a club, and make this room your headquarters. I won't charge you anything for the use of it; more than the price of your drinks; and in addition will give a dinner once a month to all the members."

As Mr. Soakum concluded his remarks he sat down. Cheer after cheer rent the smoky atmosphere; but in an instant, as if by magic, all was silence. This was caused by the entrance of the barman bearing a tray containing the drinks for the crowd, and my only wonder is that he did not drop the whole lot when the mob had yelled a moment before. Each fellow being supplied, one of them rose to his feet and proposed the health of the landlord, and success to his "scheme," which was heartily drank by all present.

Mr. Soakum returned thanks the best way his excited condition would allow, and then asked permission to withdraw, giving as his excuse for so doing, that his bar and customers downstairs had to be looked after.

After the landlord had left us we ordered another drink all round, and then came questions from all sides, as to what was thought of Mr. Soakum's scheme? Well, gents, broke in the man who had proposed the landlord's health, I think I am the oldest man in the room, and have lived in the house longer than anyone else; on the strength of this I will venture to make a few suggestions. We all signified our wish to hear Mr. Lane on the question, and after sipping his whisky and water that gentleman commenced.

As far as forming a club is concerned I think the idea a good one, but you must all know that if we rely upon our own numbers to carry it out, it will, in my opinion, be a flat

failure; here we are at the very most forty, and supposing the average attendance per night be thirty, and each of those thirty take two drinks at threepence a piece, that will net the house fifteen shillings a night, and at the end of the month all that Mr. Soakum would receive from us would not exceed twenty-one pounds. Now, I fail to see how any landlord can pay rent and the multitude of other expenses incidental to the business, and make a profit out of this amount, after giving us a dinner one night a month; probably the only night in the month that all the members would be in attendance. Now, what I have to suggest as a remedy for this, and what I think in my own mind, will be of benefit to ourselves, as well as to Mr. Soakum is, that we appoint a committee to call upon the fellows employed in the other houses in this neighborhood, tell them of our plans and invite them to join us in this matter. I see no reason why we should keep this thing so confoundedly exclusive, the more the merrier I say; besides, who can tell when any of us may leave our present berth and go into one of the other houses? Such a thing is quite likely to happen to any of us at any time, and the man who has belonged to this club, would think it very hard indeed if he found the door closed to him, because he left our house and went to work for Brown, or for Lute & Fisk. I am further inclined to think also, that Mr. Soakum really meant something of the kind should be done, when he said the room would seat a hundred fellows, but was deterred from saying so by his modesty. I am sure no gentleman present would wish to take any advantage of a man who has gone to so much trouble and expense in fitting up this room for our comfort, or wants to see him lose money by the venture!

Here arose a cry from all parts of the room of "no," "no," and Mr. Lane continued. Now let us see how many fellows we can raise from the other houses. Brown keeps at least seventy-five; suppose we calculate upon persuading thirty, five of these to join us; then Lute & Fisk employ about sixty fellows, if we can procure thirty of their names, we shall have a total of ninety-five, and perhaps with a little harder work we can stretch it to a hundred. Now, if we can get an average attendance of sixty-five per night, I think we can safely look forward to a good time, and at the same time make it a paying thing for Old Soakum, who really deserves to be patronized freely for his enteprise.

At the conclusion of these remarks Mr. Lane resumed his seat, and a fellow by the name of Barton, after looking at his watch, rose to his feet and said, he perfectly agreed with everything Mr. Lane had just said, and as it was getting late he thought it would be well to take a vote of the fellows here assembled, and then in the event of it being carried-at once proceed to appoint a committee to visit Brown's, or Lute & Fisk's on the morrow.

Mr. Johnson rose to second the motion, and it was accordingly put to the vote, without further ceremony, and carried unanimously.

"Well, gents, let's get a chairman," cried a fellow in the back of the audience. Some one cried out for Lane. Carried.

"We don't want any vice? No. Now for the committee. Hellwood! Hellwood carried. Dashlap! Dashlap carried. Johnson! Johnson carried. Harper! Harper carried."

Here the chairman rose to his feet and said: "Well,

gentlemen, with myself, that makes five; and I think that this number will be sufficient."

Everybody thought so too; so, after one more drink all round, the meeting broke up; and on the next day the committee waited on the fellows in the other houses; who were greatly delighted with the chance to do anything that would in so great a measure help to render the long winter evenings, pleasant, comfortable and inexpensive.

The next night when we entered the "Crown," our members, augmented by the fellows from Brown's, and Lute and Fisk's; Mr. Soakum was beside himself with joy, and insisted on every man—there were a hundred and ten of us—taking something "on the house;" the tame resistance we offered to this proposal was useless, so we gave way to the inevitable, and then told our landlord, how we had discussed his scheme, broached to us the night before, and in the end had decided to ask the fellows from the neighboring houses to join us.

"That's just what I wanted, gentlemen," cried Mr. Soakum, with evident delight; "nothing could give me more pleasure, only I did not like to say so last night; I was afraid you might think me over-grasping; but I am not, gents, and I'll prove it to you at the end of the month;" and so he did; for what he had in his modesty called a "dinner," turned out to be a very good apology for a full-fledged "banquet."

As soon as the drinks arrived, our delighted landlord left us to look after his bar and customers below, as he had done the night before, and Mr. Lane, who we now regarded in the light of "master of ceremonies," took a chair at the top of

the room, and, calling us to order, enquired if we had thought of the question of rules?

"Rules, be hanged!" cried several of the younger members; "we don't want any rules."

Mr. Johnson rose to his feet and said: "Mr. Lane, I don't think we need bother about framing a set of rules; this institution, I take it, will be more of a free-and-easy than anything else; and, in my opinion, but one rule is really needed, and that is this: 'That every member be a draper's assistant.'"

The rules are all carried cried the juniors, in a voice, and the older assistants raising no further objection, it was finally agreed that Mr. Johnson's suggestion be adopted, and this matter settled. The balance of the night was spent in smoking, drinking, and singing of several songs of a nautical character, chiefly remarkable for boisterous choruses; and a few minutes before eleven we left the "Crown" to seek our respective beds.

Mr. Pippin Wasteth Much Money and Affection.

The attendance next night was naturally smaller than it had been at our first meeting, but still the club-room appeared comfortably filled; and when every man had ordered "something," and been supplied with it, Mr. Lane took the chair and called us to order, then asked for some member to arise and sing a song, tell a yarn, relate an experience, or in some other way interest the company. Several minutes elasped however, without anyone responding to the call, and the chairman inquired if there were any subjects any gentleman would like discussed, if so, would he please put it to the meeting at once? But again no reply came, every fellow having apparently lost the use of his tongue.

There we sat like a lot of mummies, stolidly drawing at our pipes, and watching each other through the clouds of smoke therefrom, each man wishing the next one to say something.

"Well, gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Lane with a sigh, "you are the queerest lot of drapers I ever saw; never before have I met one but what could usually talk any other man blind. Come, some of you, open your mouths and say something." Still no one did so, except to silently sip their drinks; and Mr. Lane growing desperate, at last cried out: "Gentlemen, I can plainly see that we shall have to add one more rule at least to our already extensive list."

"What's that?" the whole lot of us cried at once, suddenly finding our tongues. "Why, if we are going to sit here like a lot of oysters and no one say a word, when the chairman asks for a song, or yarn, I move that we make it a rule to empower the chairman to call upon any man present, 'by name,' to sing a song or tell a yarn, or do something by way of interesting the audience, and the one so called upon must be bound to comply with his request."

Mr. Buggins rose to second that motion, adding that he could see no other way, judging from the exhibition he had just witnessed, by which we could ever make any headway. This motion was accordingly put to the vote by Mr. Lane, and after a good deal of wrangling was finally carried by a substantial majority.

Mr. Lane upon finding himself clothed with authority lost no time in making use of it, and glancing around the room, selected for his first victim Mr. Bright.

The young man immediately stood up and was greeted with a round of loud applause. Then arose a cry of "Song Bright," "sing us a song, Bright," "no, no, tell us a yarn, Bright," "a yarn," "a yarn," "spin us a twister," etc.

The "victim" finding the demand for a yarn to be greater than that for a song, emptied his glass, and several others being reminded of the demoralized condition of their own did the same, and rang for the waiter to fill them up again. Whilst this was being done Mr. Bright asked permission to sit down and finish his pipe, and think of something interesting to relate. This request was of course granted, and the chairman added that he saw no necessity for anyone to stand up unless they wished to do so.

The other fellows began to settle themselves comfortably in their seats, and wait for the drinks to arrive and the yarn to commence. In a very short while all preparations had been made, and without any further delay, Mr. Bright knocked the ashes from his briar and started the "first yarn:" "Well, gentlemen, as you will observe, I am not very old; therefore, as a natural consequence, my experience in the trade is rather limited; and, if by relating what I intend to, I fail to please some of the older ones in the room, it will not be because I have not done my best. As I have said before, my experience in the 'rag trade' is not very extensive, and I have found, after thinking of the matter for some time, that I shall be bound to go back to my apprenticeship in order to be able to relate anything I know, of sufficient interest." Here, Mr. Bright paused a moment to sip his toddy, and the fellows clapped a little, but did not get at all boisterous. "About five years ago," began Bright, "I had been in the trade a little over a year, most of which period had been spent in the cash desk; it being the rule of the house I served my time in, for each and every apprentice to enter the desk and remain there until a vacancy occurred by one of the others leaving; and a new boy arrived to take his place. Sometimes a lad would be lucky enough to only put in three or four months; and, on the other hand, as in my case, he would be unfortunate enough to spend a year or more, in this most trying of all positions, a boy—especially a new one in all probability fresh from some country town—can be placed in. Sick and weary of making change, and adding long columns of figures, I longed for the time to arrive for my release. And come it did at

last, for one of the fellows having served his four years to the satisfaction of the firm, he received his indentures, and with them the title of a 'full fledged assistant.' A few mornings later, a new boy entered the house and was put in the desk with me, whose duty it now became to instruct him in all the different branches of a cashier's department. This initiation usually took two, or at the most, three days; but, in the case of young Pippin, a whole week was necessary before he could manage to get along by himself; he was so infernally verdant. Why, he was so green, that I verily believe, had he been translated to the other world the first morning he entered that desk, he would have needed drying before they could have burnt him."

Here followed a burst of laughter, mingled with much stamping of feet and clapping of hands; and we all kept our eyes upon the speaker with even greater interest than before. When quietness had been restored, Mr. Bright resumed his yarn.

"In point of size the new boy was almost full-grown; he was the son of a Somerset farmer, and had large red hands, sunburnt face, and that peculiar shade of hair known as 'mouse color.' On the whole, he looked about as verdant as one of his worthy father's cabbages might have done, in the height of its greenest beauty. But however green he looked it was by his actions and words, that any adequate idea of the extent of his verdure could be formed. Whether or not he had been the popular beau and Adonis of the village he had just left, I do not know, but certain it was he had no small opinion of his ability as a ladykiller, for before he had been in the house an hour he had pointed out to me at least

a dozen girls, whose hearts he intended to shatter in the near future. When dinner time came I told the other apprentices what kind of a 'bird' Pippin was, and how he intended to play havoc with the female hearts. On hearing this the boys, who saw much fun stored in the future, all laughed heartily, and Braster inquired of me who it was that seemed to strike the amorous Pippin's fancy the greatest? I told him that judging from the many tender looks he had given her, and from the multitude of questions he had asked me concerning her, I thought it was Kate Richards. 'Kate Richards,' cried Hastings, 'great Scott, boys, but won't we have some fun with this gallant Pippin, if we don't make this farmer wish he had staid at home, my name ain't what it is.' 'What do you propose to do?' asked Braster. 'Do, why come up to the stable and I will tell you of a plan which I think will work like a charm.' And as he spoke Hastings led the way, closely followed by the rest of the apprentices, five of us in number. Having secured the door of the stable, not wishing to be interrupted, Hastings at once proceeded to divulge his scheme."

"Of course, you all know that Kate Richards is my cousin, and as Bright says, this 'green juggins' seems to be more gone on her than any of the others, I think it gives me the right to the first chance, to suggest the punishment the fool deserves."

The truth of this was so apparent that none of us sought to dispute it, but on the contrary urged Hastings to hurry up and broach his plans. "Well, in the first place, Bright, do you know if the greenhorn has got any of the 'rhino?'"

"Oh, yes," I answered him, "I saw him change a quid

this morning to pay the carrier for delivering his trunk." "Good, now what I propose to do is this: I'll go and put Kate up to the racket, and you Bright must introduce him to her; then, next Thursday as we close up at five o'clock, and are allowed to stay out till twelve, we will all go up to the city and have some fun."

"Well, but what sort of fun do you intend to give us?" cried Braster. "Don't be in such a devil of a sweat, and I will tell you," replied Hastings; then he continued, "Bright, you must go to work and make him believe that Kate is completely 'gone on him;' and then tell him that the right thing for him to do, would be to offer to take her to some theatre or music hall next Thursday evening, and if he has got plenty of money as you say he has, and is so delightfully fresh and green, there is no doubt in the world but that he will walk right into the trap. In the meantime, I having put Kate up to the game, she upon being asked, will of course accept his offer. Now, comes the part of my plan by which all of us will get a share of the fun at Pippin's expense. Having decided on some place to go—wherever it may be, Kate will of course give us the tip—Kate will tell him just as he is about to buy the tickets, that she has made arrangements to meet her two sisters and their fellows—she ain't got any sisters, but that dou't matter—who wish to go with them, but as they cannot get there before half past eight, and therefore, too late to procure good seats, would he mind buying all the tickets, and then when she met her friends they would repay him for doing so. Having done this, the next thing for Kate to do, will be to get possession of all the tickets—this we will leave to her own ingenuity, she will

work it all right—and give him the slip, and meet us five fellows at some place previously agreed upon; then we will all go to the theatre at Pippin's expense. That is my scheme, boys, and I think it a very good one, what do you think?"

We all thought it a fine scheme; but Braster, who by the way was the oldest, said he did not think it would work.

"Won't work? Why not?" cried Hastings.

"Because, when Miss Richards asks him to buy six tickets he will be sure to smell a rat."

"Smell a rat, behanged," cried Hastings, somewhat testily; "why the fellow, to judge from his looks, is too infernally green to smell anything. Besides, when he finds himself in a London crowd around a theatre box-office, with my charming cousin at his side, the country joskin will be so badly scared and excited, that I'll make a wager he'll do anything and everything she tells him to. In fact, I feel so sure of the success of my plans, and have such faith in my cousin, that I will even go farther, and promise, in the event of these failing, to buy the tickets for the crowd myself."

Such a proposal as this from Hastings left no room for further argument, and it was agreed that the scheme he had so much confidence in, should be worked. Just as we reached this decision, the sound of the second bell reminded us that time was up, and we, each of us, entered the shop and resumed our respective duties.

Whilst the second party were in at dinner, Hastings brought his cousin round to the desk, and, it being a slack time of the day, the three of us talked the matter over between us; Kate, on learning our plan, fell in with it as natural as a duck takes to water. "You leave it to me,

boys, and if we don't have a good time at the expense of this greenhorn, my name shall remain Kate Richards."

"When Pippen returned to the desk, I began to carry out my allotted part, by telling him a certain young lady had made a great many inquiries about him, whilst he had been at dinner."

"She has?" cried the delighted Pippin. "Ah! ah! didn't I tell you I'd fetch 'em. I knowed it, I did. I've seen gals afore, I have. You leave me alone. I know all about gals, I do, if I am a young man from the country?"

"To this I quietly replied that it certainly looked that way."

At this he gave a self-satisfied grin, and remarked: "Just you leave Jack Pippin alone, and he'll show you a thing or two. But, which gal is it?"

"The one with the black hair and dark eyes," I replied.

"What? the one with black hair and dark eyes do you say? Why nothing could suit me better than that 'un; she's a regular stunner, she is."

"A stunner! I should say she was a stunner, and if you like, I will introduce you to her. Nothing, he assured me could give him so much pleasure; and, accordingly, the next time Miss Richards came to the desk, I introduced the blushing Pippin."

"My, but she is a rattler; what hair, and oh, my! I never saw such eyes before except in a waxwork show, what kind of a gal is she? does she ever go to the theatre? or is she one of the religious sort?"

"She goes to the theatre whenever she can get a gentleman to take her," I replied in the most unconcerned manner I could assume.

"She does, then I am going to ask her to go with me, blowed if I ain't. Do you think she will?"

"Well, to judge from the way she spoke of you, and from the fact that she has no regular gentleman friend, I should say she would be delighted. But, I added, if I were you I would not be in too much of a hurry to ask her, she may not like to consent on the strength of so short an acquaintance; perhaps you had better wait until to-morrow; and in the meantime content yourself by paying her little compliments, and thus gradually feel your way along."

This suggestion evidently met with his approval, for he at once promised me to act upon it. Shortly after this, Kate Richards came to the desk with a bill, and as I made the change for her Pipppin paid her his first compliment, and this is how he did it: Thrusting his untidy head over the top of the desk, and covering his features with a grin, he no doubt thought most fetching, he blurted out: "hullo, my fine lass, how bist thee now? I must say thee bist looking devilish pretty."

Kate looked at him very sweetly out of her beautiful eyes, and then hung her head in the most demure and modest manner conceivable, but not before she had flashed a wink at me, without being observed by the now thoroughly excited Pippin. I could have roared with laughter at the village masher, but I knew it would seriously endanger our plans; so digging my teeth deep into my lips, I managed to exist without exploding. When Miss Richards had left the desk I really thought the kid was going to have a fit, and it was only by telling him that the shopwalker would hear him, and then stop the whole affair, that I could induce him to suppress his laughter.

"Oh," he cried, "if Bill Barnes could only be here and see me going it with a gal like that he'd go off and cut his throat. Oh, my, what a fool I have been to fight with him over such a gal as that Sal Brown, when here in London I can make a mash on such a fine gal as Miss Richards."

During the afternoon Pippin worked off a few more of his highly polished compliments, and at every one Kate would smile sweetly, tip me the wink, etc. When at last the day's business was over, and we had eaten our supper, we went up to the barracks—as we called our bedroom—here I introduced Pippin to the other boys, and told them he had done something everyone of them had failed to do.

"And what is that," they inquired. "Why, he has actually made an impression on the best looking girl in the house, that too, in a very short while; and that is something all you fellows have been unable to accomplish in the last six months."

Of course, this was only my blarney, for as a matter of fact, not one of the fellows had ever dreamed of such a thing, but they nevertheless saw what I was driving at, and appeared to be very much astonished at what they termed Pippin's good luck; but they one and all hastened to assure him that no feelings of jealousy or ill-will existed against him, for he had certainly done it fairly, and they took great pleasure in congratulating him on his success.

At this exhibition of good feeling towards him Pippin mumbled something about not knowing he was cutting anybody out, or he would not have done it; for no one knew better than he what it was to be cut out, having only last week been robbed of the affections of Sal Brown, by his village rival, Bill Barnes.

In a little while the conversation drifted into some other channel, and soon it was time for us to go to bed. Pippin, of course, had to sleep with me, we being the two junior apprentices; and when the light had been put out, he began to talk in a low voice of the subject I knew was filling his mind to the utter exclusion of all other topics. "I am going to buy her something to-morrow, but I don't know what she likes, do you?"

"Yes," I said, "she is deathly fond of chocolate creams; I have known her before now to eat three pounds before dinner." As I told him this yarn, I could hear what sounded very much like smothered laughter coming from under the clothes of the other beds. But if they were smothered laughs, they turned to smothered groans, when Pippin remarked that he was not going to do anything by halves, and if she could eat three pounds of chocolate creams in a morning, she could eat six pounds in the whole day, and six pounds he would buy her on the following day.

"You must have lots of money to be able to buy her so much at once, for of course you will buy her none but the best, and they are two shillings a pound."

"I don't care if they are five shillings a pound, I can afford it. My father gave me a new five-pound note before I left home, and I have nearly four of it left."

On hearing this I felt greatly relieved, for when he had told me of his intention to spend twelve shillings at a smack, for chocolate creams, I began to entertain grave fears for the successful working of our other plans, supposing of course that the sovereign I had seen him change during the day was all the money he had. Well, after a little more small talk

we turned over and went to sleep; at least I did, but whether or no Pippin was able to woo the gentle goddess in his excited condition, I do not know.

The next day was Wednesday, the day Pippin intended to gather much happiness to himself. After breakfast he went down the street, and we fellows who had been waiting for him to do so, knowing what he was going for, crossed over to the other side, and took up a position commanding a full view of Hayton's confectionery.

As we were speculating among ourselves as to the quantity of chocolate creams each one of us would eat that day, we saw him emerging from the shop, carrying two large white paper bags; and we hastened off to inform Miss Richards what good luck was in store for her. She entered into the joke of the thing with as much spirit as she had shown in the other matter, and promised to accept them, and afterwards divide them with the assistants in the house. When I entered the desk, Pippin was already there, and the first thing he did was to show me the two bags of sweets, carefully put away in a drawer.

"But, why two bags?" I inquired.

"Why, because they only had three pounds of creams, so I bought another three pounds of burnt almonds; do you think she will like them just as well?"

"Its strange," I replied, "that a big shop like Hayton's should be so nearly out of chocolate creams; but I suppose Miss Richards buys such a quantity of them—she had never, to my knowledge, bought an ounce, but Pippin did not know that—that they do experience some difficulty in keeping their stock up; however, I have no doubt but what

the burnt almonds will prove quite as acceptable." If they don't suit her they will us boys, I thought.

Soon Pippin began to look out for an opportunity to present the sweets, and he did not have long to wait for it. Kate being in the joke, made some excuse to call at the desk, and as she told me of her pretended business there, wished Pippin good morning,—at the same time giving him one of her sweetest smiles.

This was all the encouragement the tender youth required, and, in less time than it takes to tell, he had whipped out his two bags of candy and pressed them upon the blushing girl. Having procured the sweets, Kate hurried off with them into the warehouse below, and, strange as it may appear, everyone in the house had important business down there that morning.

Here Mr. Bright paused a few minutes to take breath and another sip of his toddy, whilst the other fellows, who had scarcely moved a muscle, or made a sound, so close had been their attention to the speaker, took the opportunity to stretch their legs and refill their pipes.

"But," resumed Mr. Bright, "the sequel to all this running up and down stairs in the morning, came at dinner time, for hardly one of the assistants in the house did justice to the meal, the sickly creams and burnt almonds had so demoralized their appetites. Soon after dinner I had to go up-stairs into the counting-house to balance the cash sheet of the preceding day, which took me until five o'clock, at which hour I went down again to relieve Pippin and give him a chance to go to his tea. I had hardly entered the desk, however, before he told me he had asked

Miss Richards to go with him to some theatre on the following evening.

"You have?" cried I, in well feigned astonishment, "and what did she say?"

"What do you suppose she said? She thanked me of course, and promised she would."

"Pippin," I exclaimed, "shake, for indeed you are a lucky fellow; why here you have been only two days in the house and have already succeeded in persuading the handsomest girl in it to go to a theatre with you; that is something no other fellow has been able to do, and you will be envied by everyone of them."

After this flattering speech of mine Pippin assumed a demeanor calculated to give one the impression that he was quite a ladies' man, and nothing in this world was more in his line than escorting handsome women to fashionable places of amusement, then remarking: If I am a young man from the country I can show you town fellows a thing or two, when any girls are around, he walked proudly off to the dining-room. As soon as the poor soft fool was out of sight and hearing, I called Hastings up to the desk, and told him everything was settled and in good running order, and even as we spoke Kate Richards approached us with a wicked look in her beautiful eyes.

"Where shall we go boys?"

"Anywhere, just you suit yourself."

"Well, I think the Oxford Music Hall will be best; then after I have got the tickets away from him, I will meet you in the parlor of the Horse Shoe." This proposal of Kate's met with approval from both of us, indeed, no place we

could have mentioned could have been better suited for the carrying out of our scheme.

Next day came, and in due course five o'clock struck and work for that day was over. The excited Pippin could not wait to have any tea, but rushed off at once to make his toilet for the evening, as soon as he left the shop. Half an hour later Rice strolled into the "barracks," in the most unconcerned manner imaginable, and taking up a book proceeded to make himself comfortable on one of the beds. Then Hastings and myself came in picking our teeth and humming one of the airs of a popular opera. Shortly afterwards Braster and Hooper entered, and to judge from the unconcerned looks and actions of us five boys, no such a greenhorn as Pippin then was would have dreamt that we had laid a trap for him.

"My, what a 'toff' he is," remarked Rice glancing up from his book to take a look at the countryman.

"Regular stunner," broke in Hastings.

"I'd like to stand in his shoes to-night." cried Braster with an admiring glance at the Pippin, and a wink and grimace at us fellows.

Amidst many such remarks as this the guileless Pippin finished dressing, and giving a finishing twist to his dirty-looking hair, and a farewell glance of approval at his general make-up, left the room.

No sooner had he left the house however, and started for the station—where, by appointment, Kate Richards was to meet him—than we threw off our everyday clothes and exchanged them for better; and in a short while we all found ourselves sitting in a compartment of the very same train

that was to bear our victim and his charmer to Liverpool street. When we arrived there we kept ourselves well in the background, until we saw Pippin call a hansom and hand Kate in. Knowing we were now safe, we left the station and jumped on an Oxford street 'bus. Soon we reached Tottenham Court road, and leaving the 'bus at this point, we entered the public bar of the Horse Shoe, and after taking a few drinks, found our way to the parlor. After waiting here for what we supposed to be long enough for Kate to arrive, and finding that she did not materialize, Hastings proposed that one of us should walk through the different departments of the house and try and find her. Braster volunteered to go, and in a few minutes he returned; by the smile upon his face we could see that his efforts had proved successful, but still we asked, is she there?

"Yes, she is in the restaurant, but the fool is with her, and I am afraid he won't be so easily got rid of as we expected. However, she saw me and gave me the wink, so it is just possible she is working her plans and may be here at any moment."

As Hastings had so confidently said it would, his cousin's ingenuity had been successful in getting Pippin to buy six tickets; and, when he had procured them, Kate suggested that as she had come away without any tea, and as there was still nearly an hour before her sisters would arrive, they go and take some slight refreshment. This met Pippin's views exactly; in fact he said he was on the point of proposing the same thing himself, as he had also come away hungry; therefore, if she knew of a good place in the vicinity to go to they would start at once.

Of course Kate did know of a good place in the vicinity and at once steered him into the "Horse Shoe." Now, this was the first time Pippin had ever been here, and the grandeur of the place, together with the crowd of handsome and well-dressed young men and women—nearly all draper's assistants, as you know this house caters largely for their patronage—fairly struck him dumb with admiration. Passing from the more crowded parts of the house, Kate led the bewildered Pippin into the restaurant and sat down at one of the tables. A smart waiter soon appeared with the bill of fare, and bowed obsequiously to Kate as he took her order for a dozen "Colchester Natives." Pippin did not know what "Colchester Natives" were, but supposed they must be all "O. K." or the dashing Kate would not have ordered them; and with as much nonchalance as he could command, said: "Give me the same."

"Anything to drink?" inquired the waiter with another bow.

"I'll take a bottle of stout," said Kate.

"Some for me," quoth Pippin, with confidence; he was now back again to familiar things.

Whilst the waiter was absent filling their order, Kate suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, by the way, "what kind of seats have you got? Let me see the tickets, I can tell by their numbers what part of the house they are in?" Pippin handed them over to her without the least suspicion of its being the last time he would ever see them, and Kate began to carefully note their numbers. Just as she finished looking at the last one, the waiter reappeared with the oysters and stout, and in making preparations to receive these, Kate lay her gloves together with the tickets on the seat beside her.

The attack upon the oysters was now commenced, and when the meal was nearly at an end, Kate, who had been keeping a sharp lookout for some of us to give her the tip, caught sight of Braster as he was making his tour of the establishment, she at once gave him the wink and he immediately withdrew.

No sooner had he done so however, when Kate suddenly starting up, cried, "Oh, there goes my sisters and their fellows, they are no doubt looking for us, so I'll go and let them know we are here, and ask them to wait a few minutes," and catching up her gloves and of course the tickets with them, before the dull Pippin knew what she was doing had left the room.

As I have already stated we were on the lookout for her, therefore, as soon as she entered the parlor we caught sight of her, and instantly rose to meet her, and the next minute we were out of the Horse Shoe making our way toward the Oxford. The tickets the green Pippin had bought procured for us some of the best seats in the house, and a right jolly good time did we have at the poor fool's expense.

When Miss Richards had been absent from the amorous Pippin five or ten minutes, he began to grow somewhat uneasy, but still sat there slowly and nervously sipping his stout, expecting to see her return every moment. But a quarter of an hour passed away, and still no signs of his late companion; five minutes more came and went, and Pippin decided to go in search of her himself, so calling the waiter he asked the amount of his bill.

Seven and sixpence, sir, if you please. When Pippin heard this he nearly fainted, and for a moment could not find his

tongue; when at length he partially recovered the use of that member, he stammered out: "Young man you must have made a mistake, this can't be my bill."

"No mistake sir, two dozen 'natives' at three shillings a dozen, six shillings; and two bottles of stout at ninepence a bottle, makes a total of three half crowns; that's quite right, sir; no mistake, sir; please remember the waiter, sir?"

"Remember you? Remember you? How do you suppose I'll ever forget you? I should thlnk I will remember you, and what's more, I won't pay no seven and sixpence for those few little bits of oysters; they ain't worth it. Why I can buy oysters at my home three times as big as those rotten little things for a shilling a dozen, and I won't pay this bill; if I am a young man from the country you can't get over me."

Just at this moment the steward seeing that something was wrong, came up to investigate, and when the waiter had stated to him the cause of the disturbance, the steward turned to the excited and perspiring Pippin, and told him sharply he could either pay the bill at once or go with an officer to the police station. These terms had the effect of bringing the unlucky Pippin to his senses, and he very reluctantly paid the bill.

Out of the restaurant into the parlor he dashed, following the direction in which he had seen Miss Richards go, but no trace of his lady friend could he discover; room after room, compartment after compartment, did he explore, until not a corner of the building remained unvisited by him, but of course you already know with what success.

Hurrying into the street he rushed off to the Oxford, hop-

ing to find her waiting with her suppositious friends for him to arrive, but on reaching the box office no trace of anyone in the least resembling her could he find. Suddenly, the thought struck him that she had met her friends, and entered the hall, supposing he would of course follow her. Without another thought he essayed to do this, but the first step reminded him of the fact of his being without the necessary bit of "pasteboard."

This left the poor devil in a quandary, and for a few minutes he stood still thinking of what else he could do, or where to go in order to find the lost object of his vain affections. Back again once more to the Horse Shoe he went, but all his efforts to find the missing Kate were futile.

In despair he sat down on one of the couches, and eagerly scanned the faces of the rapidly moving, never ending stream of well-dressed, handsome men and lovely women. As the miserable Pippin sat there lost in wonder at the brightness and gaiety around him, the thought occurred to him that Miss Richards had perhaps returned to the restaurant to rejoin him, at the very moment he was making such an exhibition of himself by refusing to pay for the oysters, and finding him in such a ridiculous position, had become disgusted and gone off without him.

Having once become possessed of this thought, do what he would Pippin could not get rid of it. The more he thought of it, the more feasible and probable it appeared to him. There he sat with the perspiration rolling down his flushed face, and altogether in a most unenviable condition. What excuse should he give for his conduct when he got back to the house was what began to trouble him next. The boys

would surely get hold of it, and there would be no peace for him until the incident had grown stale, and the miserable Pippin groaned at the thought. The oftener he put the question to himself the more remote appeared the answer. But sitting there like a fool could not, he thought, possibly do him any good, so he arose and taking a drink at one of the bars he left the house.

Reaching the street another difficulty presented itself to him. Here he was, a country lout who had lived in London just four days—and, as London is no longer a village, it is not to be wondered at if a fellow like Pippin had not, in this period, become thoroughly familiar with all its streets—and now he found himself at least seven miles away from the house in which he was employed, and three or four from Liverpool Street Station. If he could only find his way there he would be all right, as he had taken a return ticket; but to do this on foot is a very different thing to being driven there in a hansome; and having already thrown so much money away, he concluded he could not afford this luxury, and, like many other country people, he was afraid to trust himself to a three-penny 'bus.

Well, to make a long story short, it took Pippin from nine o'clock till half past eleven to reach the railway station; and had he been five minutes later, he would not have got home at all that night, but lucky for him he just caught the eleven thirty down train—which was the last—and a few minutes before the clock struck twelve, the miserable wretch entered the "barracks."

We had come down on an earlier train, and by this time were all in bed; none of us, however, were asleep; far from

it; we were awaiting the arrival of Pippin, determined to have more fun at his expense. As he entered the room, the first thing he heard was Braster, who cried out: "Where in the deuce have you been to all night?" And before he could make the answer he had prepared for this question, should it be asked him, someone else shouted out: "If that's the way you treat ladies in Somerset, you had better go back again." Then Hooper capped the climax by asking "what he meant by running off and leaving a young lady alone in a public place, so far away from home?"

These, together with several other questions, had been put to him in such rapid succession, that the poor fellow forgot all about the yarn he had concocted on the train, intended to be used in his defence, and sat on the edge of his bed the very picture of misery. The fellows, perceiving they had the advantage of him, hastened to improve it by informing him that they intended to show him up before the whole house on the morrow.

"I don't care if you do," sullenly replied Pippin. "It was no fault of mine, the girl gave me the slip instead of me running off and leaving her in the lurch."

On hearing this the boys fairly roared with laughter, much to the discomfort of the unlucky Pippin; and Hastings told him to "tell such yarns as that to the 'Marines;' they may believe you, but none of us do; indeed, we can't, after what Miss Richards has told us."

"I don't care what Miss Richards told you," retorted Pippin, rising to take his collar and tie off; and if she has told you that I gave her the slip, she has told you a d—— lie."

The next moment he had measured his length upon the

bedroom floor, and Hastings, with his face as white as his nightshirt, stood over him with clenched fists, waiting for him to get up, and the wildest excitement prevailed among the other boys. Hastings had not to wait long for Pippin to rise, for whatever he might have been, to his credit be it said he was no coward. Regaining his feet he asked for time to take his coat and vest off. This was granted him, and as he began to strip, Braster asked them "if they intended to fight it out?"

"Fight it out? of course we will," they both replied.

"Very well then, gentlemen, I propose that you each choose two seconds, and fight it out in a proper manner."

Accordingly, Rice and Hooper were chosen to perform the duties for Hastings, and Braster and myself agreed to look after Pippin.

"But what about time?" asked Rice.

"Oh, hang the time," cried Hastings, impatiently; "we'll fight till one of us goes down, and start another round by mutual consent; that is, of course, if Pippin agrees."

"I don't care," answered Pippin, "anything will suit me so long as I get fair play."

We hastened to assure him that we would see that both got fair play. As soon as Pippin had taken his coat, vest and boots off, and Hastings had put on his trousers, the fight commenced.

Pippin was a good deal heavier and taller than Hastings, but totally devoid of science in the manly art. On the other hand, Hastings, who was as nimble as a cat, was also a fairly good boxer; so take it altogether the boys were pretty evenly matched.

In the first round Hastings was rather cautious, keeping a good guard, and contenting himself with parrying the vicious blows aimed at him by his antagonist. For over a minute they moved around each other, Pippin striking wildly all the time, and Hastings on the lookout for an opening. Presently one presented itself, and his left flew out and landed heavily on Pippin's right auricle. Maddened with pain and rage he rushed furiously upon Hastings, and with brute force beat down his guard and struck him a violent blow in the chest, sending him to the floor like a log. In an instant his seconds picked him up and placed him on the bed, and proceeded to sponge him down, whilst Braster and myself attended to our man. Now, much as we should have liked to see Hastings victorious, we were, as Pippin's seconds, in honor bound to do our best for him, and give him such advice as we thought would enable him to win. Soon Hastings shouted, "are you ready?" "Yes," replied Pippin, immediately advancing to the centre of the floor for the second round. As the boys faced each other we could plainly see they both had blood in their eyes, so we made up our minds for some lively fighting. They had scarcely put up their "Dukes" before Hastings smashed his left into Pippin's right eye, at the same time visiting his food department with his right; in an instant his guard was up again, and the astonished and smarting Pippin remembering no doubt his successful rush, in the last round essayed to make another upon his nimble adversary; swinging his arms wildly around his head like the sails of a windmill, he rushed upon him, but Hastings profiting by his late experience, instead of retreating as he had done before, "ducked," and quick as

a flash passed under his opponent's arm, and came up in the rear of Pippin, who, just as he turned, received a stinging blow from Hasting's right full in the throat, and catching his foot in the leg of a bedstead went down in a heap.

We now thought the thing had gone far enough, Pippin had one eye in mourning and Hastings had sprained his right thumb when he gave Pippin the blow in the throat. Braster therefore suggested that the fight be stopped. But this Hastings flatly refused to listen to; he'd fight it out he said if he sprained every finger on both his hands. He was not going to allow a country lout like that to call his cousin a liar. On hearing this, Braster and I drew Pippin out of the room, and asked him if he would apologize to Hastings for making the remark he had about his cousin. At first he would not hear of it, but after a little more serious talk from Braster, and a look at his eye in a mirror I had fetched, he at length reluctantly consented. We then called out Rice and Hooper, and told them of Pippin's willingness to make an apology, and told them they had better use their influence with Hastings and get him to accept it.

After a few minutes' conversation with their man, they returned to us and said, "Mr. Hastings has consented to accept Mr. Pippin's apology."

Thereupon, Braster being the senior apprentice, stepped to the middle of the room, and turning towards Hastings' seconds, said:

"Gentlemen, you know what has just occurred in this room, and you also know what caused it. Mr. Pippin has expressed his regrets to Mr. Bright and myself, who have acted as his seconds, and says he is willing to retract the

offensive remark made by him in a moment of anger and thoughtlessness, and to apologize to Mr. Hastings for having made said remark in connection with his fair and beautiful cousin. Now, if Mr. Hastings is willing to accept Mr. Pippin's apology, our man will at once come in and make it, and thus put an end to this matter."

As Braster concluded his little speech, Rice, Hooper and myself cried, "hear! hear!" Then Hastings replied, "that as far as he was concerned he would just as soon, in fact, rather fight it out; but he did not wish to be at all obstinate in the matter, therefore, if Mr. Pippin would apologize to him for slandering his cousin, he would consent to shake hands and let the matter drop. Braster at once called Pippin into the room again, and told him what Hastings had said.

On hearing it the countryman walked up to his late adversary in a manly way, and putting out his hand, said he was sorry for having spoken in such a hasty manner, and if allowed to do so, would retract what he had said.

Hastings thereupon took the proffered hand and shook it, and all was over. But now a fresh cause for alarm presented itself to us in the form of Pippin's disfigured optic; some excuse would have to be made for its appearance in mourning, and what in the devil to do none of us could tell. To say he had received it in the manner he had, would be the truth certainly, but it would also be the cause for Pippin's ignominous departure, and still worse, the canceling of Hastings' indenture. Therefore, we at once decided that whatever we did, to tell the truth was out of the question. Hooper suggested that he tell the old man he had run against a lamp-post, but this was instantly voted down as

too thin and stale. At last, after several proposals of a like gauzy nature, Rice suggested that we all profess entire ignorance of the whole affair.

To make this successful Pippin would have to promise to keep his mouth shut, and when the old man asked him how he caught the "mouse," flatly refuse to enlighten him. This Pippin promised to do, saying, that if he was to be discharged, he would go with his mouth shut.

This settled, we shook hands upon it, and next minute were in bed. The following morning Pippin presented a sorry appearance at prayers, and of course, after they were over everyone wanted to know who "painted his peeper?" To each inquiry of this sort Pippin made the same reply, which was: "It's no business of yours."

Finding it impossible to get any more out of him, the fellows turned to us, but of course received no further elucidation. As was natural, Old R—— had noticed during prayer time the condition of Pippin's optic, and the first thing he did on coming into business, was to send for the unlucky countryman.

"Now, sir," he remarked sternly—you all know old R——, and when I say he said anything sternly; you can imagine how he looked better than I can tell you—"I want to know how your eye came in such a disgraceful condition?"

"Well, I ain't going to tell you," replied Pippin, doggedly.

It was something almost unheard of, for anyone to answer Old R—— in such a way as this, and you can picture to yourselves his wrath when Pippin thus defied him.

"What do you mean, you thick-headed country lout, by talking to me in this manner? Answer my question at once."

But Pippin only stood still and stared vacantly at him.

"Don't stand there looking at me like that, you d—— imbecile, open your mouth and answer my question."

Still no answer came. Old R—— now became furious with rage; his face, never very pale, grew almost purple, and the veins in his nineteen inch neck stood out like lanyards. Opening the office door he called the manager (old man Talbot). "Here, Talbot," he cried, when that functionary arrived, "take this boy and throw him out of the house, pack and baggage."

"Yes, sir; certainly, sir; is that all, sir?"

"But, wait though," broke in the boss, "why should I be thwarted in my wish to sift this matter, by a country lout like this, just come into the house? Call Braster here."

Braster came, and, of course, professed entire ignorance of the whole affair.

"What, sir; do you mean to tell me you don't know how this boy came with his black eye?"

"Yes, sir, I do," answered Braster, with great composure.

"Had he got it when he came home last night?"

"Yes, sir; he had."

"Stand aside sir. Mr. Talbot, call Hastings."

"Hastings, how did this boy get that eye?"

"I don't know, sir; he came home with it last night, and when we asked him about it, he told us to mind our own business."

Hooper, Rice and myself were all called, but we only corroborated the statements made by the others.

Finding it was useless to prosecute the thing any further, Mr. R—— sent us all about our business, telling Pippin that he would consider what he would do in his case.

But we never heard anything more of the matter; whether Mr. R— had admired the pluck of the boy, or thinking that he was in the cash desk and out of the sight of customers it did not matter so much, I do not know, but certain it is that at the end of the month Pippin was duly bound apprentice and became one of us. Then, and not till then, we told him of the trap we had laid for him, adding that we had done it for his own good, for if we had allowed him to go on in his reckless career of heart-breaking, there was no one could say where he would stop. London girls you know, are so very different to those of a small Somerset village, and would, if given the chance, bleed him of every penny he got, and then laugh in their sleeves at him. Instead of losing his temper as might have been expected, Pippin took the whole thing as a mighty good joke, and seeing the mistake he had made even went as far as to thank us for playing him the trick.

As Mr. Bright concluded his yarn, cheer after cheer rent the air, and many of the fellows sitting near him insisted upon him drinking with them. This, Mr. Bright who had been speaking for an hour and a half, was not at all loth to do.

When the confusion had in a measure subsided, Mr. Lane looked at his watch and informed the crowd that it was already near eleven o'clock, and we should have to run for it. He then on behalf of the audience tendered to Mr. Bright sincere thanks for relating to them the first yarn of the organization, and we then broke up and sought each man his respective house. Thus ended the first night of our club, and it certainly augured well for the future success of it.

The next night the room was full to overflowing, partly because it had been raining all day, and partly on account of the fellows who had been in attendance the previous night having related in glowing colors the substance of what Mr. Bright had told them.

On Mr. Lane taking the chair, and rapping on the table to call the fellows to order, he asked if all were ready to commence the evening's business. Receiving no answer to this question he of course inferred that they were, and at once began to scan the audience in search of a victim. As he did so, it was a noticeable fact that most of the fellows made a point of avoiding the chairman's eye, but that functionary however, did not allow it to prevent him from soon selecting a member.

Mr. Tomlinson, I think we'll give you a chance to distinguish yourself. As Mr. Tomlinson heard his name called, he jumped much in the same manner as a man who had just sat down on the business end of a pin placed in his chair, by his playful, but profanity provoking eight-year-old —— that is, he rose to his feet with more alacrity than grace.

"Oh, Mr. Lane," began Tomlinson, who, by the way, was the most nervous draper I ever knew, "really, Mr. Lane, I can't tell a yarn, I never could. Oh, Mr. Lane, please excuse me this time!" "Mr. Tomlinson," sternly remarked Mr. Lane, "you were here I believe when the rules governing

this society were framed, and you also helped to make these rules—both of them—now, one as you know is, that any member called upon by the chairman must either tell a yarn, relate an experience, or sing a song. Now, you can do which of these you wish; but one of them you must do, so do not waste the time of the audience, but commence at once."

The confused and heated Tomlinson saw by the tone of our chairman's voice, that any further attempts at evasion would avail him nothing, and nervously glanced for a few moments down at his shoes. Finding no relief obtainable in this direction, he stared meditatively at the ceiling as though seeking an inspiration from the painted figures thereon. Two or three minutes had thus been spent, and the fellows were growing restless, when the wretched Tomlinson was brought back to a realization of his position by the chairman rapping impatiently upon the table. Mopping his face with his handkerchief, and with a voice which showed in its every note it was one of despair, he rolled out the first verse of a then popular music hall song. It was a lucky thing for him that the song had a chorus, in which all the fellows could join, for had it not been so, he certainly would never have got through with it. As it was though, he found himself still alive, and just as many fellows in the room at the conclusion of the last verse, as there had been at the beginning of the first. When Mr. Tomlinson sat down he was greeted with loud applause, and some of the fellows who had no pity in their make-up, shouted loudly, "encore!" "encore!" "Give us another song, Tomlinson?" But this he absolutely refused to do, and Mr. Lane called for order, and then made a search for further prey.

Mr. Peacock, you have had a large and varied experience in the trade, and can, to my certain knowledge, spin a twister; so I think you had better take a turn now. Mr. Peacock, a man of about thirty-five, and chiefly remarkable in his appearance for the possession of a pair of very blue eyes, which, by some means or other—I know the means, but it is not necessary for the reader to know—he kept continually "trimmed" in very bright cardinal; only a shade brighter, however than his nose, at once rose to his feet and stated his willingness to comply with the wish of our worthy chairman. "But, as he was not much of a hand at lying, he would content himself by relating a 'fact.'"

These remarks, coming from Mr. Peacock, were greeted with loud and derisive laughter; for it was a notorious fact, he had the reputation of being one of the greatest liars in the trade. As the sound of this merriment died away, Mr. Peacock, in an apparently injured tone of voice, said:

"Gentlemen, to judge from the bantering tone of the laughter you have just indulged in, one would think I had not spoken seriously! Now, as I see many here to-night who are complete strangers to me, I don't think it is very nice of those who know me well, to thus defame me; it might have the effect of damaging my hitherto great reputation for truth and integrity."

Here another shout of laughter, mingled with stamping of feet and other boisterous hilarity, rent the tobacco-smoke-clouded atmosphere of the club room.

Some fellow cried out: "Oh! Peacock, stop your blarney and tell your yarn; we don't care whether it's a lie or the truth!"

Mr. Lane rapped gently on the table and brought the audience to order, and Mr. Peacock announced his readiness to commence. But before doing so he said: "I want you all to understand that what I am about to relate is a fact; and I can, at the present time, see two men who will be able to corroborate me."

Seating himself, Mr. Peacock began by saying: "Those of you who were here last night and heard Mr. Bright relate his story of 'Pippin's love making,' will remember him saying these words: 'Next morning at prayers, Pippin presented a sorry appearance.' Now, it was hearing this sentence reminded me of a little incident which happened in a house I was once living in. One of the many rules of this establishment read something like this: 'Any employé failing to attend prayers, will be fined one shilling.' These prayers were held at the same hour that our's were, eight o'clock, and consisted of a chapter out of the bible, and a few of the prayers, from the book of common prayer; all of which were read by the boss himself. Strangely out of place did these prayers seem to me; not but what I hold, bad as I am, with commencing the day with sincere prayer, but this was not sincere; far from it, in fact, and before I get through I will prove it to you. Oh, no, this house had prayers because Meekings, ourselves and many other houses have them, not because the boss had any wish of making model men and women out of his assistants. Oh, dear, no; not a bit of it; for the average employer of to-day does not care the toss of a tinker's farthing for the morals of his help, but their business ability must be great and A No. 1, or they can't keep their berths, even though they be the greatest saint in the trade.

"Morals! pshaw! who ever heard of, or looks for, a high class of morals in a draper's shop? Is it not a fact that the girls of one of the largest houses in the world, boast of making more money out of the shop than they do in? Certainly, they do.

"I have met in my time probably fifteen or twenty thousand draper's assistants, and out of this vast number I know of but 'four,' earnest, Christian men. Think of it, gentlemen, only FOUR MEN OUT OF TWENTY THOUSAND that would not tell a lie to sell their employer's goods, or roll out a string of oaths if they got a swap. Only four men out of twenty thousand have I ever known that would not do these things, and I have never forgotten them. One was a Mr. Dagley, I knew him at Roberts' of Stratford; another was a Mr. Wilson, an Irishman; a third was a Mr. Barrel of Daniels' of Kentish Town Road, and another was Mr. Bates, also of Roberts' of Stratford.

"Now, some of you fellows are no doubt thinking to yourselves, that if so few of the draper's assistants are what they should be, certainly they must be a class to whom the scriptures should be read, and one standing greatly in need of prayers. If any of you have such thoughts passing through your minds, you are quite right; they should have someone perform such duties for them, but let that 'someone' be a fit and proper person for the office, and not every Tom, Dick and Harry who happens to find himself at the head of an establishment. This very man may be, and often is, one of the very worst among them, and every person in his employ may know his character. What can be the effect produced on his hearers, by a man, who only the night before

had been put to bed drunk, dares to come down the next morning and read God's holy word? Is it any wonder that the men instead of listening to the prayers when being read by such a man, should shake dice, or match coins, or do anything else irreverent? Of course not."

Mr. Peacock who had worked himself into quite a heated condition, so strongly did he feel the situation, here paused for a moment to wipe his forehead and empty his glass, and then in somewhat softer tones he resumed his narrative.

"The man who was head of the house I am speaking of was just such a man as this, and I will now relate to you how it came to pass that he took a tumble to himself and quit reading prayers to us in the mornings. The room in which the devotional exercises were gone through was the dining-room. A small table at the further end, on the left-hand side, answered the purpose of a reading desk, and on the same side of the room was the door opening outward into a passage, so that when the boss was at the table reading the prayers he was, of course, in a position rendering it impossible for him to see the door open. Well, one morning one of the fellows overslept himself, and, as a natural consequence, was late for prayers. This did not trouble him in the least; but the thought of losing a shilling did. Now, he knew that if he could only get into the room before the prayers were over and answer to his name he would be all 'O. K.' and his shilling safe. Creeping softly down the passage he listened a moment at the door, and found that the old man was still reading, so he decided to wait until they knelt down, then in the scuffle and confusion incident to this part of the service, he would open the door and slip quietly in on his hands and

knees. Accordingly he listened attentively to hear the old man say 'Let us pray,' which would be the signal to commence operations. He hadn't long to wait for this tip, and as soon as he got it, Bob turned the handle of the door and pushed it open. Just as he did so however, a gust of wind swept down the narrow passage and blew it to with a loud bang. Guessing what was up, the boss paused in his reading and said, 'Shut the door,' then he resumed the prayer. He had not proceeded very far, however, before Bob made another attempt to save his shilling; but this time the handle failed him, for as he turned it, it gave a most teeth-edging creak. When the old man heard this second interruption, he cried in an angry voice, '*Shut that door.*' On hearing it closed he started in on another prayer—the one known as 'A General Thanksgiving'—but he was destined never to finish it. Everybody in the room was on the titter, and the old man was as mad as a dog with a tin can tied to his caudal appendage. Bob, however, cared nothing about this, all he cared for was the saving of his shilling; so he again advanced upon the door, and taking the handle in his hands for the third time, turned it slowly and cautiously, and to his great joy found it had not repeated its former squeaking. Again he slowly drew the door open, but alas for his luck; this time the door itself gave him away, by sending forth one of those prolonged groans peculiar to a newly varnished condition. This was too much for the old man, who, utterly forgetting his present devout occupation, roared out, '*Will you keep that damned door shut?*' Now, little as the fellows knew of the prayer-book and its contents, they were confident it contained no prayer with such a sentence in its com-

position, and it was with difficulty they suppressed their laughter.

"When the old man realized what he had done, he rose to his feet, and without saying another word, left the room; and that was the last time he ever read the prayers to his assistants. They were not abolished, however, for he hired a poor curate from a neighboring parish to perform the duty in his stead."

As Mr. Peacock concluded, many voices were heard asking him "if that was what he called a fact?" But before he could answer, however, two of the fellows arose and testified to the truth of what they had just heard Mr. Peacock relate. They were the two men he had referred to for corroboration, and were, they said, living in the house spoken of at the time the circumstance took place. "And what is more," cried one of them, "there is the very 'Bob' who caused the old man to so far forget himself." As the speaker said this, he pointed to Mr. Peacock, who rose and smilingly bowed his acknowledgments of the cheers that were thereupon given him.

"But," cried someone in the rear, "you didn't tell us how you saved your shilling, Bob?"

"No, of course not; as I said once before this evening, I have a reputation for veracity to keep up; and if I had told you I saved my shilling, I should have told you a lie, for I did not save my shilling, I lost it," and the unfortunate Peacock, turning to the fellow sitting next to him, said: "Stand us a drink old man, I am awful dry; you know it is only five years ago since I lost that shilling, and I have never been able to make it up yet."

The fellow treated him, and the other men also had their glasses refilled, and, after a few more songs, interspersed with short stories not intended for these pages, the time for breaking up came, and the room was empty once more.

A Discussion Produces Many Unvarnished Facts and Unvarnished Yarns.

Next day we received an addition to the staff of assistants in our house, in the shape of a young man about thirty-five years of age. Before he had been behind the counter an hour, the fellows in the same department had found out that he had just returned from the United States after an absence of six years. Now, knowing something of the ability to yarn possessed by our Yankee cousins, they at once decided that this gentleman—who ever after went by the appellation of the "American"—would prove a valuable acquisition to our club, and they lost no time in describing to him the chief features of the organization; at the same time tendering him an invitation to join. The "American" at once assented and promised to do his best when called upon by the chairman.

That night we took the "American" 'round to the "Crown" and introduced him to the men from the other houses. Mr. Lane had not yet arrived, and the fellows were filling their pipes and ordering their drinks, whilst Mr. Soakum was passing among us, looking the picture of contentment and

good nature. Presently, Mr. Lane came in, and right on his heels appeared the waiter loaded with the beverages, and assisted by his employer he soon had them distributed. Mr. Soakum made his usual excuse and withdrew, leaving us to ourselves, but not before Mr. Lane had informed him that his company would be always acceptable. "Come whenever you feel like it, Mr. Landlord, for you laugh so heartily that you equal at least half a dozen in your applause; and applause you know is everything to one spinning a yarn or singing a song."

"Order, order," came the cry from the chairman, and we at once wheeled our chairs and couches into position and waited for the night's proceedings to commence.

"Gentlemen—last night Mr. Peacock, in the course of relating his 'fact,' told us that he had in his time met some fifteen or twenty thousand draper's assistants, and out of that vast number he could only name four who were thoroughly good men. This statement has presented itself to me several times during the day; and every time it did so, I was bound to admit that the truth of it was greater than I wished. Now, I am an older man than Mr. Peacock by at least twenty years, and probably I have met in my time, even a greater number of draper's assistants than he has, but after thinking the matter over the whole of the day, I find I am unable to recall the names of even *four men* who were, and are, what they should be. Now, gentlemen, in view of these facts, I propose, to-night, with your permission, to depart from the ordinary rule of calling upon someone for a song or incident, and instead, open up a discussion on this very subject: 'Why is it that the average London draper's

assistant is not what he should be?' If there be any gentleman in this room to-night who can elucidate this matter, I am sure all will be pleased to hear from him."

Having thus put the question to the meeting, Mr. Lane sat down, and we all waited for someone to give his views upon the subject.

Presently a Mr. Browning said, "He thought that the trade was in such a condition that any man who wanted to make a success of it, could not do so without becoming both a liar and a schemer."

Mr. Lane again rose and said, "The question of lying was in his opinion but a secondary one, inasmuch that it involved only the one resorting to it. What he considered to be the primary evil existing among the assistants of both was the amount of immorality prevalent in their ranks. How many of the prostitutes found upon our streets at night will tell you they had once been respectable shop-girls? How many who are prostitutes seek to hide it from the world by still playing the role of a draper's assistant through the day? As Mr. Peacock said last night; is it not true that the girls employed in one of the largest houses in the world boast among themselves of making more money out of the shop than they do in it? I have been thirty-eight years in the business, and during that time I have known dozens, yea, scores of girls who had their lives wrecked in the great houses of this great city. I am not a saint, neither do I pretend to be a whit better than those I see around me, but when I say that it grieves me here to-night to say that I am disgusted with the trade I am in, and ashamed of the villians it has produced, I speak the truth."

A deep and painful silence followed these last remarks from Mr. Lane, each and every man sitting with his eyes apparently tracing the pattern of the carpet and slowly puffing away at their pipes. No doubt if it were possible to temporarily suspend animation and lay bare the hearts of those assembled, many of them would have been found pierced with the sharp dart of truth Mr. Lane had just hurled at them.

No man in the room spoke for several minutes, and the stillness was beginning to grow oppressive, when we saw Mr. Pole, the "American," rise to his feet and say: "Gentlemen; there are many of you here whom I have not seen before in my life, and none of you have I had the pleasure of knowing before this morning; but if I may make bold to address you on so short an acquaintance, I think I can in a measure—it may be only a slight one—answer the question put to the meeting by our worthy chairman: 'Why is it the London draper's assistant is not what he should be?' "

These remarks were hailed with delight, as in fact anything serving to break the Quaker-like stillness would have been.

Mr. Lane assured the "American" that anything he could say, calculated to explain the distressing question, would be received with both attention and pleasure.

Thus assured, the "American" began by repeating the question under discussion. "The chief cause for this is, in my opinion, that not five per cent. of the draper's assistants in London are married. Now why are they not married?

"Because they can't afford to marry! Many of them no doubt would if they dared; but when they look at their

meagre salary on the one hand, and then at the cost of living on the other hand, the idea is at once and forever driven from their minds and they gradually, but surely, drift into the channel of circumstances.

"To those here to-night who have never given the matter any serious thought this may seem strange, and I naturally look for the question: 'Why can't they afford it? Lots of men who get no better wages marry. Look at the number of men who bring up a family on a salary of £1 a week; why they can be counted by thousands.' All this is doubtless true, but if you take time to think of the matter and look at the class of men that marry and raise a family on £1 a week you will find that they belong to an entirely distinct species from the draper's assistant. They are either farm laborers, navvies, hod carriers, or something else of a similar character. Now, we will see how it is possible for one of these men to raise a family on a sum which the draper finds inadequate to keep himself and wife only. In the first place, as you all know, ninety per cent. of London assistants find it necessary to spend from £10 to £15 per annum for clothes alone; for no matter how small his salary may be he is expected—nay more than that he is *compelled* to dress as well as the highest-salaried man in the house. Then, if he should marry, his wife is almost sure to be one of the girls in the same business, who has spent all of her time since leaving school behind the counter, and as a natural consequence she can know nothing of the principles of economy in housekeeping, or the duties thereof, other than the most simple. This, of course, renders one of two things imperative; she must either keep a servant, or have her mother live with

them. As a rule the maid puts in an appearance, that is, if the husband has anything to say in the matter, for however poor he may be, it is easier for him to pay a girl wages than to keep a mother-in-law.

"Now, he is married, it is only natural for his wife to expect to be dressed as well, if no better, than she was when single; this is another expense. Then they must live in a respectable locality, not too far from John's place of business. Now comes the cost of living; he works from early morning till late in the evening, in a close and dusty atmosphere; and as a natural consequence his appetite is poor and fickle, This has to be tempted by all sorts of slops and messes. which come expensive, but contain little or no nourishment, and frequently a doctor's bill finds its way into the house.

"Now, let us look at the man who raises a family on £1 a week. Clothes will probably cost him £3.10 a year; say three working suits at fifteen shilling each, and one better suit for Sunday's at twenty-five shilling. He, like the draper, marries a woman chosen from his own station in life; perhaps another laborer's daughter, who has been taught to cook and bake and scrub, wash and iron, and in short, all the duties needed to fit her for a laborer's wife; consequently, she enters her house, which by the way, need not be in a hightoned quarter—mistress of it. Again, she does not desire her dresses to be any finer than they had been—they would only make her uncomfortable and render her conspicuous among her own class.

"Her husband, unlike the draper's assistant, often works in the open air, and when he comes home to his meals he can eat with a relish, whatever his wife has prepared for

him; usually good, strong, healthy, but inexpensive food. I think these few comparisons between the two classes of men will be sufficient to show that what one in his station of life finds adequate to rear a family on, the other, with his wife alone to provide for, would find insufficient.

"I once knew of a young man who thought he could do it, and tried the experiment, but in less than six months he had sold his furniture, his wife was back behind the counter, and he, himself, a wiser, but sadder man, but still in love.

"I have heard many opinions regarding this state of affairs in our business, and have also heard many suggestions made calculated to alter it. Out of these I have chosen what I consider to be the most correct, and the only one by which we can ever hope to obtain any good results. Some time before I left London to visit the United States, I was talking to an old London assistant, on the question of wages. He told me his father had been in the trade some forty years before, when wages were good, but, says he, 'the help was good; not so much of it, certainly, but what there was, was good; and, best of all, no women folk. Now,' says he, 'the whole thing is this: just as long as we have so many girls in the trade, just so long will our wages be cut down. Why, my father has often told me that it was a very common thing, in his time, to start a boy just out of his time on a hundred pounds a year—and it is a good job it was or I would never be telling you this now. But in those times,' he went on to say, 'men learned their business well, and were paid well for it, but now a days the trade is overrun with girls working for £15 or £20 a year. And, although I contend that one good man is worth a dozen of them, the em-

ployers keep on taking them. May be they think numbers give the appearance of doing a large and prosperous business; but, if they do, they are several points out of their reckoning, for it is the quality, and not the quantity of assistants a man keeps that builds up a sound and successful business.'

"'Speaking of quantity, puts me in mind,' he continued, 'of an incident which happened to me just after I was out of my time, and looking for my first berth as an assistant. It is only a short story, but will serve to illustrate as a case in point, that many employers do look at quantity rather than quality, and, if you like, I will relate it.' I told Mr. Handley that I should be pleased to hear his story, and he commenced. I will, as near as possible, give it in his own words.

"'First of all, you must know that I had served my time in a first-class Westend house; my father paid a premium of £60 for me to learn the trade, and you can bet I learned it, After I had put in my five years, I was just twenty-one, and sick of the place; so I quit and started to look for another berth. The first house I struck was one in Oxford street—which it was does not signify, it is still there. I walked in dressed in my frock coat and silk hat; just the same as you see the fellows dressed to-day; for twenty years have made no difference to the London draper in respect to clothes, and asked for the engager.'

"'Any vacancies?'

"'No, nothing this morning,' and I was out of the shop into another in less than no time. Here I met with no better success; and thus it went on, day after day, week

after week, and at the end of a month I was still out of 'color,' and my funds running low. Having exhausted all the houses in the West end, I now made up my mind to take whatever I could get, and each morning carefully read the advertisements. I was just finishing breakfast on the first day of my second month at 'cribbing,' and was about to throw the paper down without having found anything likely to suit me—there were any amount of 'ads' for experienced men, but, as I have already told you, I was just out of my time; I could hardly muster the nerve to answer any of these—when my eye caught one in the 'Miscellaneous' column: 'Wanted—A 'smart junior,' one not afraid of work, and a good window dresser. Apply at once, S. & Co., Commercial Rd., London, E.'

"'Its a rather tough quarter, thinks I, almost in White Chapel, but beggars must not be choosers, so here goes, and I jumped on a bus and in a half an hour found myself talking to the man who advertised for a 'smart junior.'

"'After looking at my indentures and asking the usual questions, the one of salary arose. I told him I would not mind starting at £50 a year, with the promise of an advance in a month or two. No sooner had I said this than I thought the man had gone into a fit; there he sat glaring at me, with his hands twitching, and his mouth working as though a fish bone had stuck in his throat. I watched him for two or three minutes, during which time I was debating whether I should go to his assistance myself, or open the door and call for help, I really did think the man had got a fit. I had just made up my mind to call for assistance and was about to do so, when I heard him begin to speak, much to my relief I can assure you.

"This is what he said: 'You d—— little fool come out here and I'll show you something,' as he spoke he left the office literally dragging me after him, wondering as I went if he often 'had 'em.'

"'Look here,' he cried; 'do you see that man down the other end of the shop with all those whiskers?'

"I looked in the direction indicated and I saw a big country lout, whose proper place would have been behind the plow.

"'Yes I see him, what about him?'

"'What about him? what about him?' he repeated fiercely. 'Why he stands six feet one in his stockings, weighs sixteen stone eight and works for £25 a year. That's what's about him. And here you a d—— little whipper-snapper, without a hair on your face asks me £50 a year; what the devil do you mean sir?'

"I gave another look at the £25 wonder and thought what a help he would be to his mother when he grew up. I then put on my hat and at the same time told him he must have made a mistake in the advertisement, for it was evident to me he wanted 'whiskers' and not 'sense,' and the next time he advertised for them he had better call them by their proper names, instead of 'smart juniors.' I then left the shop and next day got a berth in the N. W. district. Now that's the sort of men who believe in quantity, more than quality, and will go on employing girls and clod-hoppers all their business lives.

"'Now look here Pole,' continued my friend, 'the quicker girls quit the 'rag trade' the better for us and the better for themselves.'

"How will it be better for the girls?

"'Why, this way,' he replied, 'You know as well as I do that the girls don't come into this business because they like it; and yet if you say anything to them about it, ninety-five per cent. will tell you, 'they don't have to work'—and judging from the salaries some of them get there must be some truth in the assertion. Now, if they don't like the trade and 'don't have to work,' what on earth are they in it for? To this question there is but one answer, and I got that from one of the girls 'direct': 'The girls who go into the trade are 'in the market.' Yes, sir, 'in the market,' just as much as the goods they sell; but I wont say sell, for girls never 'sell' anything, the customers just simply 'buy it;' and there is a vast amount of difference between an assistant selling goods and one merely doing them up and taking the money for them.'

"'Well,' continued old Handley, 'if the girl who told me the chief reason of her sex being found in such great numbers behind our counters was to find a husband was correct, how many of them succeed in doing so? 'Don't know.' Then I will tell you; there are just as many female draper's assistants get married as there are male; and you all know how many that is.'

"'Now, if these girls would stay out of the business, and go into service, they would earn better wages, have better homes before marriage and become competent to make good homes after marriage, and also stand a better chance of securing a husband.'

"'How do you make that out Mr. Handley?'

"'Why, just in this way, if they kept out of the trade,

men who are not much better than girls themselves in it, would either have to improve, or get out as well. And those men who are worth three or four girls would get three or four girls' salary, and the house employing them would make money.'

"'Let me illustrate this to you. In the house we are now working—it was one in the East End—are employed about thirty fellows and about eighty-five girls. Now, look at Linsey's, of Kentish Town Road, their business is quite as large, if not larger than ours; yet they keep but forty men, and no girls, except in the millinery, underwear and cloak departments. Their salary list for these forty men will be about £2,400 a year, that is allowing an average of £60 a year to each man. Then they have about fifteen girls in the departments where they belong; allow these £20 apiece per annum, and you have a total £2,700, producing not less than £75,000 a year.

"Now, what are our returns for the same period? Not more, I am confident. Let us see how much it costs in salaries to produce it."

"Supposing, we say that out of the thirty men employed, fifteen of them are only *half men*; assuming this to be the case, a fair salary for them would, of course, be £30; that will make a total of £450 for the fifteen *half men*; the fifteen *whole men* are paid £60, the same as Linsey's *whole men*; making a total for the males of £1350. Now for the females. Out of the eighty-five, fifteen are apprentices and, therefore receive *no pay*—but they have to be fed all the same. That leaves seventy. Now, allow these seventy girls the same wages as paid to Linsey's, an average of £20, that will ag-

gregate £1400, making a grand total for our house of £2750 against £2700 paid by Linsey's."

"Now, another question arises. If it costs, as the employers say it does, £60 a year per head to board and lodge fifty-five hands? It is a very easy matter to find out how much it will cost to keep a hundred aud fifteen."

"Now, don't you see what I am driving at? If these girls would stay out of the trade, the consequence would be more men in it; and every man a good and 'whole man,' getting a good and 'whole man's' salary, thus enabling him to save something to get a home with and marry on. But as long as we have girls overcrowding the trade, and working for a song, so long will we have men in our ranks who are not scoundrels by nature, but rather through circumstances; who, finding their salaries insufficient to enable them to marry upon, and being but human, apply the talents intended by their maker to be used in wooing for themselves a wife, to the seducing of shop girls."

"After old Mr. Handley had thus explained the question to me, I felt bound to admit that there was a preponderance of truth in what he had said; and I most heartily join with him in wishing the time not far distant, when a girl in the trade will have become a thing of the past."

"This may seem very hard on the girls, but until it does come, no customer can walk into a shop without having some misgivings as to whether she will be waited on as she should be—in an intelligent manner. This, also, appears rather rough on the fair sex; but, nevertheless, it is a fact, for not ten per cent. of the girls employed in the large houses of England and America have any business there.

They are as a rule indifferent, often lazy, and more frequently know less about the goods they are tossing about —for to show them is an impossibility—than the customers themselves. Why, I remember, while living out in a California city, hearing a girl repeatedly inform customers asking for Paisley shawls, that they meant 'broché;' and then add, they often get called *Paisley*, but the correct name for them is 'broché.' She will probably continue to do so, until some old Scotch lady comes along, and then look out. I heard another girl, in a Kansas town, tell a lady that all black silks were one shade, the only difference in them being the make and quality. The same girl, on another occasion, told a customer that black cashmeres were only made in two shades, 'blue black' and 'jet black.' And yet her employers were paying her as much salary as some of the good men. They had an idea that because the girl had lived in the town all her life, and knew everybody in it, she would act as a 'magnet,' so to speak, in drawing custom to their establishment. This notion I found to be a very popular one in many of the cities I visited during my stay in the United States. I need not tell you that such an idea is erroneous and a pack of nonsense; for as you all know, it is *value for their money*, and *not acquaintances*, the masses are usually looking in shops for; and, in these times of keen competition, whoever gives the most for the money will get the majority of the custom, even though they employ none but strangers to their customers; for if a man knows his trade as he should do, he can and *will* do as much or more with a woman he has never seen before, than a girl who has lived next door to her all her life. These, gentlemen, are

my views—together with those of one of the oldest draper's assistants in London—upon the subject, and I hope many of us here present will live to see the day when our girls will put some of their false pride in their pockets, and go into the kitchen and the nursery, instead of crowding the men they wish to obtain for husbands out of our shops.

As the "American" concluded speaking on this, to us, all important question, a young man inquired if he could suggest any means by which the desired result could be obtained. The "American" again rose, and said he was afraid he could not. The only possible way such a change of affairs could be brought about was, in his opinion, for the employers to absolutely refuse to engage any girls, and until that time he saw no chance of the matter being remedied. The assistants can't do anything, for God knows if one of them left because the house employed girls, their berths would be filled inside of an hour.

Mr. Johnson here arose and asked the "American" if he did not think situations as domestics were hard to get. I am aware that you have just returned from America, where I know servants are in very great demand, but here in England I am of the opinion it is somewhat different.

The "American" took out his pocket-book and said he would answer Mr. Johnson by reading a paragraph cut from a daily paper of one of the cities he had lived in, in the United States. Here it is:

"People never cease to wonder that girls and women prefer the shop and factory to domestic service, even at a very much lower rate of actual compensation. That this is so cannot be gainsaid, for the shops and factories are overrun, while the households go begging for competent service."

This is true not only in the United States, but throughout the civilized world. There is as much complaint in Great Britain of the inadequacy of domestic service, and as much demand for it, as there is with us.

Mr. Johnson expressed his willingness to take a back seat; he would not think, he said, of doubting the correctness of anything found in the columns of an American newspaper, they are such renowned organs of truth and veracity.

This may have been sarcasm on the part of Mr. Johnson, but whether it was so or not, no one ventured to discuss the question farther, and Mr. Lane observing many of the fellows looking at their watches, thanked the speaker of the evening for entertaining them, and we then sloped.

* * * * * *

It gives the author great pleasure to state that since hearing the above matter discussed, many houses both in England and America have adopted the system of running their establishments with nothing but men, and judging from the manner in which they persevere in it, the new idea must be a success."

Tongues have they, but Speak Not.

One night I had been out on a little private business, and having to pass the "Crown" on my way back, it was only natural for me to turn in. When I entered the club-room I found a Devonshire fellow on his feet in the act of responding to a call from the chair. Mr. Davis was a man who I had often wished to hear called upon, for I knew he could tell more yarns, and had been in a greater number of berths than any man in London. He once told me he had lived in thirteen establishments in one year, and one of these positions he had held for six months; therefore, he must have found twelve other situations in the remaining half year.

Congratulating myself, I ordered a drink, and otherwise made myself comfortable, feeling sure of listening to some interesting and amusing incident from the Devonshire fellow. Mr. Davis informed us that it was within the range of possibility for him to tell his "yarn" just as well sitting as standing, and without further ceremony resumed his seat.

Refilling his pipe and taking a swig at his cider — he always drank cider—he commenced, and I have endeavored to give his exact words, that is as nearly as my antipathy to profanity will allow.

Every woman has a way of her own, in which she does her shopping; one will enter a house and upon being met by the shop-walker, will tell him in a polite manner the article she wishes, and get shown to the counter where she may

procure it. Another will bounce past him, snapping out as she does so, that she knows where she is going without him telling her. Very often she will walk the full length of the floor, only to discover that she really does "not know" where she is going. This makes her mad and she asks someone for the article she requires, and is informed that she will find it on the other side of the house, near the door. Now, if this woman had possessed sense enough and manners enough to tell the floor-walker of her wants, she would have saved herself an infinite amount of trouble, besides keeping her temper intact. Another comes in and takes an hour to select a print dress, and very often brings it back next day to exchange, and after fooling away another hour or so, suddenly remembers the hurry she is in, and tells the assistant to make haste, which of course he does, in his mind. In pleasant contrast to this class of customers, is the one who will buy dresses for a whole family, and still find time for a "constitutional" before lunch.

Another will sit on her chair in a genteel manner, politely listening to what a man has to say about the goods he is showing her. The antithesis to this lady, who by the way gets better attention and is shown more goods than some of the cranks who stroll through our houses, is the hard-featured old chromo, who never will sit down, but stands up and pulls the stuff around herself, utterly ignoring the attention of the salesman. After jerking the folds out of about a dozen pieces, she gives them a final push of disgust at the same time saying, "I see you ain't got what I want," and sails out of the shop. Then, again, many ladies come in knowing exactly what they need, and when

they see it, buy it, and get out. Others never do know what they want, and if you attempt to tell them, they are insulted. I'd rather go to "Heaven" than wait on a woman of this class. But they are perfect angels compared with the crank who comes up to your counter, asks for something, sits down, and never again opens her mouth for anything. I believe that every man and woman in the trade will agree with me when I say, this class of customer is the very worst of any they ever swear at—to themselves, of course.

There she sits looking at everything shown to her, never saying whether it suits her or not, if you ask her "if she is able to make a selection from the goods already before her?"

No answer, only a blank stare, with sometimes another feel of the goods.

If you inquire, "Is the price too high?" No answer.

"Is it too low?" No answer.

"Is the color the one desired?" No answer.

"Shall you show her some more?" No answer.

Thus it goes on, she looks at everything that is shown her, but remains all the while as mum as an oyster.

If she would only say the articles were dear, off color, too narrow, too common, in fact anything that would give a fellow some idea of what the trouble was, it wouldn't be so bad; but to sit there, playing the part of a mute, leaves you without any foundation whatever to work upon.

After a little while, such acting as this disgusts the assistant, and this being accomplished, it is only a very short step for him to lose his temper; and when he does this we all know what happens. The goods are rolled up, withdrawn,

and put back into the shelves, and the first thing the "mute" discovers is a wide expanse of counter. Finding nothing of particular interest in the "mahogany," she gets off her chair, pulls down her veil, adjusts her bustle, and leaves the shop, followed by the kind prayers (?) of the fellow who had the misfortune to wait on her.

I will now tell you how a woman belonging to this tribe threw four men out of a job:

"I once lived in a house in the north of London, that was visited by an unusually large number of this class of shoppers. Indeed, they at length became such a nuisance, that we decided something would have to be done or there would be no living in the place. Accordingly, we put our wits to work to evolve some scheme by which a stop might be put to their unprofitable and tiresome visits. A whole day passed, but nothing feasible had presented itself to us, and, we may have been several days longer in this quandary had it not been for the most fortunate arrival of a new man the next morning. Now, we could see our way clear to work something that had previously occurred to us, but had been abandoned for the very reason that it required a stranger to accomplish it. Now we had that stranger, and all we desired was the speedy arrival of our first victim. Just after dinner she came, in the form of a young lady who made a practice of coming to the counter accompanied by her mother. The old lady would tell one of us to show her daughter some goods, and then leave her to go off to some other part of the house and do some trading on her own account. No sooner did we catch sight of the interesting couple than every man, excepting the new one—who, of

course, did not know them from any other customers—remembered he had very important business to attend to in some other part of the house, and straightway went off to see to it. When we returned the new man was tearing down the dress-goods and sweating like a bull. With a smile and wink at each other, we took up a position behind a pile of goods, from which we could see all that went on. As we three fellows stood there watching the unfortunate wretch, yanking down the stuff and covering the counter to a depth of two or three feet, it was impossible to help pitying him, for well we knew he was doing it all for naught. For over ten minutes he talked and sweat, and sweat and talked, but never a word, or even a look, could the poor devil get from her. At last, turning round and catching sight of us three fellows standing in a group grinning, he thought something must be wrong. So, pretending to go for some more goods, he came up to where we were standing, and gazing up into the shelves as though searching for some particular shade, he asked us, sotto voce, who and what that thing was he was waiting on?"

On hearing the question, we looked at the girl, and Evans said:

"Oh, we forgot to tell you, and of course, as it is the first time you have waited on her, you do not know her. Her name is Smithson, and she is deaf and dumb; have you been talking to her all this while?"

"Why, of course I have, and she has never said a word since I started to serve her."

"Well, that's strange, I'm sure," remarked Evans, "considering she is *deaf and dumb!*"

"Well, never mind your sarcasm," replied the new man, "but tell me how in the deuce do you wait on her?"

"Why, you have to get a piece of paper and write down whatever you wish to tell her, and she will do the same."

As the new man went back to his delightful customer, he procured a piece of paper, and we slipped back behind the pile to watch for further developments. We saw him writing something on the paper, and in a few minutes handed it to the young lady to read, and at the same time placing his lead pencil beside her. As we saw this, we each attempted to masticate a roll of goods in order to prevent our laughter escaping, and thereby give us away. But our merriment did not last long, however, for the next act in the performance we witnessed was, the girl folded up the paper, placed it in her purse and then, rising to her feet, she walked out of the shop.

This proceeding on the part of Miss Smithson, as I have just intimated took all the laugh out of us, for well we knew what to expect; there was no doubt in the world but what the girl would show the writing, (reflecting so strongly upon two of her senses) to her mother, and naturally that lady—who really was a good customer of the house—would report it to the firm.

As we watched the retreating figure of Miss Smithson, the new man came up to us with a look of great concern in his face.

"Look here, you fellows, you have been playing some joke on me," he began. There was no chance for us to get out of it, so we made no attempt to deny it; but hastened to ask him what he had written?

"It strikes me," he replied, "You'll all know soon enough without me informing you."

"Well," said Price, "if there was anything in it likely to cause a row, you had better tell us at once, so we shall know how to act; what did you write?"

Why this: "Madam, having only this morning entered the employ of this house, and therefore not knowing you, I was entirely ignorant of your affliction; and I assure you, have only just this minute been informed that you are deaf and dumb Please write down any questions you may wish to ask me, and I will give you an answer to them in a like manner!"

Notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, when the new man had repeated what he had written to the girl, we found it impossible to keep from roaring; but when seriousness had once more been restored, one of the fellows asked what we thought the best thing to do?

"I vote we all quit before any complaint is made," I said. "I second that motion," cried Price. "What do you say Evans?" "Why! I shall do whatever the majority does, and as two will make a majority let us get out at once." That settled it, and we immediately went to the counting-house to draw our pay.

I was the first to enter, and as someone is continually leaving their berth in this trade, nothing was said to me; but when Price asked for his "pieces" the old man thought something must be wrong, and asked him why two men from one department wanted to leave at the same time? Price gave him some evasive answer and got out of it as well as he could; immediately afterwards Evans went in

and told the boss he wanted to leave. "What the devil is the meaning of all this," cried the old man? "Three men in one stock quit without a moment's notice; what's the matter with you all of a sudden? Haven't I paid you enough salary?"

"Yes!" replied Evans, "the salary is all right, but something has just happened which makes it necessary for me to leave."

"What is it?"

"I can't tell you sir!"

"Can't tell me be d——you must tell me," shouted the old man growing furious.

Evans not liking the tone he was being spoken to in, also began to get huffy and cried out defiantly, "well I won't tell you, so that's an end of it."

"Then I won't pay you your salary," roared the Guv.

"Oh! yes, you will, and what's more, you will pay it *at once*, or I'll know the reason why."

"Oh! you will, will you? and pray what can you do? You, a twopenny-halfpenny assistant, if I tell you I am not bound to pay you," sneered the boss. "The rule of my house is, that all salaries be paid monthly, and if anyone wants to leave I can compel them to give me a month's notice, or lose a month's money."

When the old man got through, he looked at Evans, as much as to say, "There! now, what do you think of that for a piece of law?"

Whether or no this question passed through his mind I am unable to say; but if it did, he got a complete answer to it when Evans said, "And pray why didn't you tell Price and

Davis that? You paid them without making any of this fuss, and you must pay me. Besides," he continued, "any rule which won't work both ways is no good."

"What do you mean by that?" shrieked the boss, his temper once more getting the upper hand of his sarcasm. "I mean this, last week when you discharged Smith, Brown and Robinson, you neither paid them an extra month's wages or gave them a month's notice previous to dismissing them; and if they are not entitled to it, why then you are not, and what's more, you won't get it; so hand over my salary, or I'll break your face,"—and Evans would have done it too.

What Evans had just said to the old man either struck him as having more truth than rhyme in it, or he became fearful of carrying a cracked skin about him for some indefinite period; but no matter the reason, whatever it might have been, two minutes after Evans had thus scared him, he had paid the money and our chum was with us on the outside. We crossed over the street and took up a position commanding a good view of the entrance to the shop we had just left, and waited to see if Mrs. Smithson and her injured daughter would put in an appearance. Much to our delight and amusement, in a short while we saw them hopping along and heading straight for the shop; and both of them, to judge from the snapping look in their eyes, were bent upon making it sultry for some poor devil.

When they entered, we felt sorry for the new man as we thought of the dressing down he would get from the old man, assisted by the two angry females. If we had only thought of it and persuaded him to throw up the job, as well as our-

selves, we could have enjoyed the joke twice as much; for just fancy the old woman and her daughter waltzing into the office and making a complaint, and when asked to point out the offending salesman, find no one there at all. How would it do for one of us to go and get him to quit now? He would only lose half a day's salary anyway, and may be save himself from being discharged.

"I don't think that would work," said Price, "you see he is the only fellow in the stock, and the Guv. would hardly have the nerve to swap him under the circumstances. Besides,——"

But, whatever Price was about to add we never heard, for just at that moment we saw the old man come tearing out of the office, followed by the irate females. We could not see the dress goods counter from the street, consequently we were unable to witness the pantomime which occurred there, and to content ourselves with waiting until we met some of the fellows, who could describe it to us. We had not, however, to wait as long as we expected; but our information came from a very different source from the one anticipated, for as we stood watching the entrance, we were suddenly surprised to see the new man himself emerge therefrom.

At once suspecting something of a highly interesting nature had transpired, we hastened to the other side of the street and caught up with him. In answer to the question we put to him, he told us the following:

"You fellows had only left the house a very short while before I saw the 'deaf and dumb' (?) girl, accompanied by her mother, walk in and make a dart for the office; guessing what their errand was, and knowing that I had but

half a day's pay to lose, I made up my mind to take no abuse, either from them or the boss. They had only been closeted with the boss for a very few minutes, before he tore out and came to our counter, closely followed by the two ladies.

I saw at a glance he was boiling, and the women themselves didn't look any more like angels than they had to.

"Which man insulted you in such a manner, Miss Smithson?"

That delightful creature (who could both speak and hear quick enough now,) pointed me out as the culprit. "But," she added, "I don't think he is so much to blame as the other three, who, I feel sure, put him up to it."

"Oh yes he is," cried the boss, he should have known better. As for the other three you speak of, I have already discharged them, (and of course the women not seeing you fellows present believed it) and to make a still further example, I shall punish this yonng man severely by fining him heavily. When I heard this I got hot, and knowing I should lose my half day's pay if I quit, I could not even allow this great item to prevent me from having my say out. In an instant I had called the boss a bald-headed old liar, telling him he had done no such a thing, the three men had left of their own accord and as for fining me heavily, as he proposed, I should see him in "London fields" before I'd pay a copper. Then putting on my hat I jumped the counter and told him I thought the best thing he could do was to get another man to wait on his customers, as I had gone to a school where they did not teach the "deaf and dumb alphabet." So you see I got a whack at the women and gave him a kick at the same time.

Although this ruse of ours had worked disaster to us, inasmuch as it had been the means of depriving us of our situations, it did much good in the trade eventually; for shortly after it occurred, nearly every house in London had heard of it, and whenever a woman of this offensive class was caught playing her little game, two of the fellows who were disengaged at the time, would stand just close enough to her to be distinctly heard, and then relate, what soon became known to the trade as the "deaf and dumb yarn." In nine cases out of ten, the woman who heard it would take the hint and find, and use her tongue.

* * * * * *

If the foregoing should ever be read by any lady who is in the habit of shopping in such a manner as the obnoxious Miss Smithson, I sincerely trust no offence will be taken, as I can assure them none is intended. Far be it from the author's desire to hurt the feelings of any lady, and my sole reason for relating the incident at all, is, to point out to such ladies, the means by which they can secure better attention from the salesmen, and at the same time, make his lot—which at the best is a thankless and trying one—more comfortable and easy to bear.

The Major Joins the Army Before He Expected to and also Brings About a Much Needed Reform.

The first month had passed away, and the jovial Mr. Soakum made extensive preparations for the first "dinner," as he modestly called it; but in reality, as I have heretofore said, this proved to be about the best apology for a "banquet" I ever had the pleasure to help dispose of. Nothing, not even the smallest detail, had been forgotten or overlooked. And when the eventful evening arrived our smiling landlord looked the picture of happiness as he moved around the table with his "swallow-tail" on—no doubt one he had preserved since the days of his early servitude—seeing that our glasses were kept filled by the army of waiters; most of whom had been engaged for the occasion. Precisely at seven o'clock the attack commenced, and if you think the fight was not fast and destructive, you are greatly mistaken. The fish, served out from the head of the table by our worthy chairman, and from the foot of the table by the "American"—who by this time had become one of the most popular fellows in the company—disappeared so rapidly that the only wonder to me was the entire absence of choking from bones. No sooner had the fish, or rather the dishes which had held them been removed, than in came the waiters bearing in their arms, turkeys, geese, ducks and other fowl, in such quantity that one would almost expect to notice the difference in the numbers of the feathered tribe.

These "flew" away before the relentless attack, as rapidly as could be reasonably expected, considering the present denuded state of their wings. Thus it went on, one course following close upon the other, and not until half past eight was the cloth removed, the waiters "tipped" and discharged, pipes lighted and drinks served. Then one or two who had seen the bottom of their glasses oftener than was good for them, broke into loud and boisterous song.

The whole company refused to take Mr. Soakum's usual excuse for retiring, and insisted upon that worthy taking a seat and spending, if not all, at least a part of the evening with us. After giving the dinner a chance to work down and settle a bit, Mr. Lane called the meeting to order, and singled out Mr. Johnson to do his duty. Mr. Johnson got upon his feet, not without some difficulty, and evidently much against his will, and provoked the audience to laughter, which, though loud and hearty, must have been very painful to many of them besides myself, by saying: "I will give any man in this room five shillings that will take my place. I don't want to shirk my duty, but I am so tightly packed my lungs have not room enough left to perform their proper functions." This offer, of course, was received with derision; and above the shouts of laughter it provoked, could be heard the grampus-like puff and roar of our host.

Mr. Lane, on procuring silence, ruled that the excuse given by Mr. Johnson was not sufficiently good to allow that gentleman to break half the entire number of rules at one smack. This decision was received by all present with loud and prolonged and perhaps a few inebriated cheers of approval; for most of us knew that if we could only get old Johnson wound up, he would keep going for no end of time.

Finding that further excuses would be likely to avail him nothing, and giving a very audible groan, Mr. Johnson bowed to his fate, and began:

Well, gentlemen, as I was eating the stuff which has put me into such a very uncomfortable condition—I wish I could feel as uncomfortable every day—I thought what a contrast it offered to the "salt horse" and "boiled baby" i. e. corned beef, and salt pork, on which we are so often regaled by our generous (?) employers; and when the cheese and celery came on at the end of the sumptuous meal, it brought before my mind, vivid pictures of the ancient cheese and athletic butter we are so lavishly supplied with at supper time.

As I thought of one and devoured the other, an incident which happened years ago in the house I served my time in, came to my recollection; and, as I think from its nature it is the most appropriate to this occasion of any I know, by reason of the contrast it will make, I have decided to relate it. Before commencing, however, I should like to have a window or two opened, for even if my lungs have no room to expand in at present, I should like them to have a chance at something to work on when the time comes.

One of the fellows accordingly pushed down a window, and Mr. Johnson started:

In the house I am about to speak of, it was the rule for one of the shop-walkers or buyers to take the housekeeper's place at the head of the table at supper time, and serve out the butter and cheese. Now, it was also another rule that if a fellow, or a girl for that matter, had at the first helping taken butter, he could not take cheese at the second helping,

but had to stick to his first choice. Why this was so I am not prepared to state; probably our employers were prompted by a desire to see us enjoy good health and thought two such vile compounds could not harmoniously exist in the delicate food department of the average draper. If they did, I give them all the credit due them for their solicitude. But whatever the reason, the fact still remains that such was the rule. Of course, all sorts of ruses were resorted to, to obtain a change when desired, but the most popular and successful was this:

Suppose, for instance, a fellow took cheese the first time and found it too "strong and alive" for him to combat, he would find one of his neighbors who had got some butter, and borrow a small piece from him, removing all traces of the offensive cheese; he would then smear his plate over with the butter and pass it up to the head of the table, at the same time crying out "more butter." As a rule this worked all right; but sometimes the shop-walker would remember he had sent down cheese before and refuse to "grease." Through this absurd rule, a most amusing thing took place. One night, an apprentice we called the "Major"—on account of his avowed intention of entering the army as soon as his time was out—struck some butter that was unusually rank; carefully removing all traces of it, he procured a piece of cheese from the fellow next to him and crumbled it over his plate, thereby giving it the appearance of having previously contained that delectable article. Much to his surprise however, when his plate came back, he found a second helping of the tallow-like substance upon it.

"I sent up my plate for cheese, Mr. W——," cried the "Major."

"I know you did and I sent you down butter."

"Well, I had cheese the first time and I want it again."

"You had nothing of the kind sir, so don't lie."

"Who is lying?" cried the "Major" in a rage. "If you tell me I lie I'll punch your head."

"Look here, young fellow," observed Mr. W——, white with suppressed wrath, "you think that because you are nearly out of your apprenticeship, you can say and do just whatever you please; now I am going to show you and everyone else in the room that you have made a grave mistake." And without another word Mr. W—— left his seat and made for the "Major."

As the "Major" saw him approach he rose to his feet, and big as he was, we all saw he was somewhat scared; but now that he had started the row he had to put up with the consequences; so putting on the boldest front he could command, he cried out, "now you keep away from me, I don't want to hurt you, you ain't my size." These remarks however, did not have the slightest effect upon Mr. W——, who rushed upon the "Major" and struck him a sound blow on the ear.

Everyone in the room now became more or less excited. Some of the girls screamed and others said, "why, we're going to faint." Whether they did or not none of us ever knew or cared. The fellows who were evidently enjoying the prospect of a fight, took no notice of the poor girls. The "Major" on feeling the blow, became furious, and at once closed with his antagonist.

"Give 'em room, do you hear?" "give 'em room," came the cry from all parts of the dining hall.

As the two men were swaying to and fro in their struggles some of the other buyers and shopwalkers thought the thing had gone far enough, and made an attempt to separate them. This, however, they found to be no easy matter, for no sooner were their intentions declared, than they found themselves forcibly dragged back by the now thoroughly excited crowd. Finding it of no use for them to again interfere—as by so doing they might have caused a free fight—they contented themselves with taking the names of all the fellows present, intending to report, and fine them on the morrow.

The combatants were pretty evenly matched in strength, and at the present stage of the fight it was hard to say who would prove the victor. Now Mr. W—— would have the best of it, and the next minute shouts offering to lay the odds on the "Major" would be heard.

Mr. Johnson paused for a few moments to take in a little of the fresh air, which he told us, his lungs were in a condition to receive.

I think, gentlemen, before going any further, a little explanation of the battle-field will be necessary for the better understanding of the balance of my yarn.

The dining-room of the house was situated on the second floor, in the rear part of the building, and directly underneath was the kitchen.

Now, there being, at the time I am speaking of, some hundred and fifty or more in the house, to carry the food upstairs required by this number would have been no joke, so a lift had been put in to obviate this extra labor. As this lift eventually became the means of putting a stop to the struggles of the "Major" and Mr. W——, I will briefly

describe it. It was about four feet wide, five feet high, and perhaps three or three and a half feet deep. On the inside was nailed a card informing the world that it was not a "passenger lift," and the manufacturers would not be responsible for any accident occurring through its being put to an improper use.

Near the lift the men were now struggling, each striving to down his adversary, while the excited crowd of fellows fairly danced around them, egging on and encouraging their respective favorites, and in this way it was easy to discover that popular feeling was on the "Major's" side. Presently, with a desperate effort, Mr. W—— freed himself from the "Major's" grasp, and before that aspirant for military honors could prevent it, he received a stinging blow on the point of his chin. If the crowd had been excited before, they were fairly wild at this, and shouted to the "Major," "to go in," "finish him off," "why, you are big enough to eat him," came the cry from many of the fellows.

Maddened with pain and rage, the "Major," who so far had certainly got the worst of it, rushed furiously upon the shopwalker, caught him firmly around the waist, picked him off his feet and hurled him to the floor, amidst the frantic and enthusiastic cheers of his admirers. Only a moment, however, did Mr. W—— remain in his prostrate position, and the next he was on his feet again.

The "Major," excited by his former success, combined with the applause it had gained, made another attempt to repeat his feat; and would, no doubt, have succeeded, had not some fellow shouted: "Put him in the lift." No sooner had this been heard, than every man in the room repeated

it; and quick as a flash the "Major," instead of throwing his adversary to the floor, changed his mind and jammed the struggling shopwalker into the open lift, and a dozen willing hands slammed to the door and released the brake, amidst the yells and shouts of laughter of the delighted mob. We could hear the lift descending to the kitchen below, and some of the fellows rushed down to receive the strong cargo, whilst those remaining behind gave the "Major" three rousing cheers.

We saw no more that night of the unfortunate shopwalker, after he had made his exit in such a novel manner; but the next day he made his complaint to the boss, and the "Major" was sent for to give an account of his conduct.

"Cummington," began Mr. S——, "what is the meaning of all the disturbance you caused last night?"

"Well, I like that," replied the "Major," "I didn't cause any disturbance. It was Mr. W——; he called me a liar; then struck me."

"I did not call you a liar," retorted Mr. W——. "What I said was this: When you told me you had been helped to cheese the first time, I said it was nothing of the kind, and don't lie; those were my exact words, as near as I can remember; and you know it."

"Cummington, this is a very serious matter, indeed, and I have a great mind to cancel your indentures!"

"Hang it all, cancel them; the quicker you do it the better," cried the "Major."

Mr. S——, who until now had spoken very quietly and gently, when he heard the "Major" thus defy him, completely lost control of his temper, and, white with fury, he roared out:

"Do you know what it will mean, sir, if I cancel your indentures?"

"Yes, I do; it will mean that I shall join the army ten days before I hoped, or expected to; that's what it will mean!"

"Look here, young fellow," shrieked Mr. S——, stamping about his office, and shaking both his fists in the face of the "Major," "don't you dare to trifle with me in my own office; I won't have it, sir; no, sir; I won't have it; neither from you or anyone else; and, mark well what I say, sir, if I cancel your indentures, you will go out of this house in disgrace and without a character; do you hear?"

"Character! character!" remarked the "Major," with a grin; "character, be blowed; a fellow don't want any character to go into the army with. You can keep your character, I don't want it."

"You infernal scamp, leave the office; leave, sir; get out of my sight at once," yelled the boss, almost bursting with rage and passion caused by the contemptuous way in which the "Major" had treated his threats.

On receiving this command, the "Major" wheeled right about and stamped out as loudly as his heavily soled boots would permit. Then Mr. S—— turned to Mr. W—— and said, "he could do nothing more in the matter; for he could plainly see that, even if he were to destroy his indentures, it would please, rather than punish the offender. If I were you, I would have him arrested for assault and battery."

But Mr. W——, knowing the other fellows were against him, and could also swear that he, himself, had struck the first blow, said "he did not want to be so hard upon the boy;

he was perfectly willing to let the matter drop, if Cummington would return to the office and apologize for his conduct in the presence of Mr. S——." Accordingly, the boss had the "Major" recalled, and told him what Mr. W—— wanted.

When the "Major" heard the terms by which peace could be arranged, he turned on the shopwalker and said:

"He would see him, etc., etc., before he would apologize to him. Its like your infernal cheek to ask it; for instead of me asking your pardon, I think it is your place to apologize to me."

"Cummington," broke in Mr. S——, who had regained, in a measure, his composure, "I decide you are in the wrong. You had no right to say impudent things to Mr. W—— or any of the shopwalkers; and I'll give you just one minute by my watch to make an apology. If at the end of that time, you have not complied, out of this house you go, pack and baggage."

Mr. S—— then took out his watch; and Mr. W——, who looked very miserable—as though he already scented further mischief—and not knowing of anything better to do, imitated his employer. In about ten seconds the "Major" inquired if time was up? But his question was completely ignored by both Mr. S—— and his manager, whose face took on a still more wretched expression. When at length the time had expired, and the "Major" saw the watches returned to their owner's pockets, he shouted: "Hurrah for the army," and rushed out of the office. Before any one knew what he was about, he had left the shop. Mr. S——, who had only meant his threat as a "bluff," guessed at once what the "Major's" intentions were, and dispatched a couple of the fellows to

the enlisting sergeant's office to head him off; but when they arrived there, not a sign of the "Major" could they discover; and upon making inquiry of the officer, were told that no such man as they described had been there that morning; and the two fellows at once concluded that he had gone direct to Whitehall, and, having so much start of them, it would be folly to pursue him farther, they therefore returned to the shop.

About one o'clock, in walked the late apprentice, with the ribbons still streaming from his hat, and we all knew he had started on his career to become a bona fide Major. It was no use for Mr. S—— to raise a racket, when he saw what the "Major" had done; for he knew enough to see that his chances of holding the man in his service were very, very slim, when compared with those of the government. Accordingly, the "Major" was allowed to pack his trunk in peace, and, having done this, he shook hands with us all, and I have never seen him since.

"A few days afterwards Mr. S——gave orders for the assistants in future to be allowed to have cheese or butter, or both if they wished, declaring his entire ignorance of the previous rule, which he characterized as ridiculous. So, after all, the "Major" had been the means of procuring a reform much needed in the house, and no one regretted the incident.

"That's all; will some fellow give me a drink?"

Dining off Boiled Baby for Six Weeks.

When order had once more been restored, a member rose to his feet and said: "Some of the remarks made by Mr. Johnson in relating his yarn had struck him very forcibly, and he felt that no more fitting occasion than the present could arise for a little comment on the disgraceful way in which some firms boarded their employés. In my opinion," continued Mr. Sansome, "what we need is a regular inspector, appointed by the Government, to see that the food prepared for the hundreds of thousands of assistants, by their employers, is of a fit and proper quality, and a fair equivalent for the amount deducted from their wages to provide it for them. If a man asks for a salary of a hundred a year to 'live out,' they tell him: 'Oh! we don't permit anyone employed by us to 'live out,' but board them all in the house; and as we allow £60 a year per head for that purpose, the best we can do for you is £40 a year, and 'live in.'

"Now, every man in this room knows as well as I can tell him, that £60 a year will keep two assistants in the vile way they are so often kept at the present time. Take our house, for instance, what kind of living do we find there? Let us look at last week for an example.

"On Sunday we had cold 'salt horse' and 'spotted dog;' of course it is only necessary to review the dinners, as the breakfasts, teas and suppers are the same from the first of January to the last of December. On Monday we had

'boiled infant' and pease pudding, and, if I remember right, a great number of us went hungry till tea time. On Tuesday what remained of the 'baby' was dished up to us in a cold state, and a slice of 'poultice pudding,' * added by way of desert. Wednesday, the festive 'resurrection pie' made its appearance, and I'll swear I actually recognized pieces of the 'salt horse' I had left on Sunday. Thursday, being a short day—although we get quite as hungry by noon as on any other—and consequently less money taken, they cannot be expected to afford such a good meal for us as on a full day; we were therefore made still better acquainted with the already familiar leavings of previous feasts (?) through the medium of that delectable dish known to the civilized world as "hash." Friday, we got a half-way decent meal of roast beef, thank God. Saturday, what remained of the joint was served cold, together with a slice of "bugs in a bolster."

"Now, are there any here to-night fools enough to believe that such stuff as this, and the other trash we get for breakfast, tea and supper, costs the house £60 per year?"

"No! No!! Not half of it," cried every man in the room with great vehemence.

"Then why do we pay it?" and Mr. Sansome waited a minute for an answer, but getting none, he said, "I'll tell you why we pay it. It's because we don't dare to refuse; for well we do know what the result would be. They would simply tell you, that if the food provided by them was not good enough for you to eat, you had better leave; and they would probably add, that there was hundreds of men whose mouths were just watering to get a chance at the same viands."

*This sometimes appears on restaurant bills of fare as "cottage pudding."

"The only feasible method arising to my mind," continued Mr. Sansome, "by which this greatest of all wrongs we have to suffer may be remedied, is, by giving to the public, through the medium of the press, some account of the true state of things, together with a list of the names of houses who do not give their employés fit and proper food to eat. If this were done, I guarantee the firms thus shown up, would at once improve their tables. If the chairman will allow me to give a little experience, by way of demonstrating to those present, how much the employers dread any exposure of this sort, I shall be pleased to do so."

Mr. Lane looked at his watch and found it was not yet eleven o'clock—and as on Thursday nights we were not required to get in before twelve, gave his consent, greeted by the stormy applause of the whole crowd, who, by this time, had become full of a spirit of reform—or some other spirit—in this direction.

Mr. Sansome prefaced his yarn by remarking that what he was about to relate was in every particular true.

When I had left the house in which I had served for four years for nothing, I got a berth over in the north of London, in an establishment, the proprietors of which were trying to emulate the famous Whitely. The neighborhood, however, not being very thickly settled, and the men being anything but prepossessing in manners, it was no wonder they made a failure of it.

For months before the final crash came, we all saw that it was only a question of time with them, and then the doors would be closed and a whole army of us would be "out of collar."

Now, as would naturally be expected, any firm who kept a large staff of assistants, and among the other articles of commerce, a full stock of groceries and provisions, would, of course, use from this supply on every possible occasion, as by so doing they would make two profits. As long as they were able to keep the butcher shop open, we had fresh meat, at least twice a week, but after a while their trade in this department fell off to such a small item they decided to close it up. Now, it had never struck any of us that with the butcher shop closed our supply of fresh meat would be cut off, but we very soon found this was to be the result.

"The grocery department, at this time, was well stocked with salt pork. When I say well stocked, I mean largely stocked. And the mother of the firm, who acted as their househelper, fell back upon this from which to draw supplies. And I tell you she did draw 'em with a vengeance. Monday it was boiled salt pork, or as the trade calls it, "boiled baby;" Tuesday came, and with it another supply of "boiled baby;" Wednesday came, and they cooked another "child;" Thursday found the "infant" still with us, but cooled off; Friday they cut him up and endeavored to bury his mutilated remains in a mess of indigestible "pease pudding;" Saturday we were introduced to another little stranger, and on the Sabbath, as an extra treat, what remained of it was brought on, in what the housekeeper had the nerve to call "pork pies." The next week was almost an exact repetition of the previous one, and loud and many were the curses and imprecations heaped upon the head of the person who had first brought 'boiled baby' into the world. The girls had by this time become unable to eat any more of the muck, and

sent to a neighboring confectioners for rolls, cakes, etc., and many of the men bought bottles of lime juice, declaring they were already developing symptoms of scurvey. This outrageous state of affairs was kept up for another two weeks, and many of the assistants, both male and female, finding it impossible to put up with it any longer, left the house, whilst those who were unfortunate enough to have to remain —amongst whom was myself—went on eating hog, hog, hog, until at length we had not the nerve to look a pig in the face.

For over six weeks the bald-headed old wretch whose duty it was to "dissect the child," never varied the dinners once, and had it not been for an incident that occurred one night, in all probability she would have made no change for another six weeks. One night we went down to supper—the only meal we were allowed to take without this old terror presiding at the table—and when the maid-servant had brought in a cheese, and again left the room, we started to appease our appetites. One of the girls taking a seat at the head of the table, made an attack upon the cheese; but, when the first slice had been cut out, revealing the interior, the girl gave such a piercing shriek, we thought she had cut her finger. "Oh! come quick; look, look, its all alive; take it away, take away," she cried. The fellow sitting nearest to her pulled it towards him, and sure enough it was ALL ALIVE. I never saw anything like it in all my business career and I think I have lived in some of the toughest houses in London. Why, I'll take my bible oath there was not a pound of sound cheese altogether, the balance being one mass of wriggling maggots. This was more than human

nature could endure—especially when it had been starved for nearly six weeks—and one of the buyers indignantly announced that he would stand it no longer. "If you fellows will back me up, I'll undertake to settle this thing once and forever this very night." Desperate with hunger and rage, we assured him we would back him up in anything, if by so doing we could obtain something fit to eat.

"Well, then let every man keep his mouth shut, and every lady both her mouth and her nostrils closed, and do as I say without asking any questions."

In an instant our lips were sealed, and we stood mutely by to obey his commands.

"First of all, pass that stuff around and let everybody take a portion of it, and put it on a plate." When we had done this Mr. Duke said, "Now, ladies and gentlemen, before making the next move, I want to tell you that we have for the last six weeks been treated worse than any convict in any prison in England, and now has been added the straw that will break the camel's back, and I, for one, do not intend to stand such treatment any longer."

"Nor I," came the cry from the starving crowd. "Go ahead, Mr. Duke, and we will stand by you."

"What I propose doing," continued Mr. Duke, "is to march upstairs, and the whole gang of us range ourselves around the parlors of the firm, and there show them the difference between the 'rot' they would feed us on and the substantial fare they regale themselves with. Now, there are over sixty of us here, and if each one can carry a plate of this muck so far without allowing it to escape—for I notice it is very active—I think we shall be able to spoil at least one of their meals by turning their stomachs."

During the time it took Mr. Duke to make these remarks he had been carefully placing a quantity of the offensive and lively cheese into a small can, which he told us would play a very important part in the game, if our demands for better living were not acceded to.

"Now, I want every person to promise me, if they set any salt pork before us to-morrow, that they will leave the house on the spot, without a moment's notice; and if such a proceeding does become necessary, this little canful of 'maggots' will be brought out and made use of, in what way I will not state at present."

"Now, will you all promise what I ask?"

"We do," came the answer as though it had been given in one voice, instead of sixty.

"Then take up your plate of 'live stock' and follow me," and Mr. Duke opened the door and began to ascend the stairs, followed by every man and girl in the house, each bearing a plate of the vilest filth any human being had ever been called upon to eat.

Up two flights of stairs we went, and reaching the door of the apartment we knew was occupied as the dining room of the family, Mr. Duke gently knocked.

A voice from within said, "Come in," and the crowd began to titter, but this, however, was instantly stopped and Mr. Duke pushed open the door. As we expected, the family had just sat down to their own supper, which by contrast to ours appeared to be a veritable feast.

Mr. Duke walked in, holding his handkerchief to his nose with his left hand, and his plate of "fish-bait" with the right; and before any of the family could sufficiently recover

from their surprise, the room was packed with men, women and maggots.

The old woman was the first to find the use of her tongue—which, of course, was perfectly natural, as she had given that member the most practice—and she fairly shrieked out: "What's the meaning of all this? How dare you bring such filthy stuff into this room?"

This last question was the worst she could possibly have asked; and Mr. Duke lost no time in answering it. "You ask how we dare to bring this filthy stuff into this room? Now, I will ask you how you dare provide such filthy stuff for our stomachs? Surely they are entitled to as much consideration as this room." Before anything else could be said, the boss got up and with an angry oath commanded everyone of us to leave the room. But we had promised to stand by Mr. Duke, and not one of us moved an inch. Furious with rage the boss cried out: "You, etc., etc., leave this room at once or I'll —." But 'ere he could add another word Mr. Duke stopped him, indignantly exclaiming: "Look here Mr. B——, that's enough of this; we may have eaten enough pork in the last six weeks to transform us into *hogs*, but by G—— we are not DOGS. And I want you to understand you can't apply such vile epithets as this to us with impunity, and by all that's holy, if you do not at once apologize to these ladies for using such language in their presence, I'll give you the soundest thrashing you ever got in your life." And he would have done it, for Mr. Duke was not the man to be played with when once aroused.

Fearful the matter would end in some serious trouble, the other boss went over to a window, threw it open, and in a

loud voice shouted: "Police, police." Two officers who were passing at the time stopped as they heard the cry and inquired the cause of it. Why, there is a fight going on in the house, come up at once. A very few seconds found the policemen on the scene, and observing the threatening attitude of Mr. Duke, who had paid no attention to the cry of police, but had taken his coat off and rolled up his shirt-sleeves, at once laid hold of him.

This was more than we had bargained for and the girls, growing alarmed at the turn things had taken, threw down their plates in a confused and squirming mass and rushed from the room. Then followed a perfect babel of tongues. The old lady who in the excitement had got a "list to starboard" on her wig, declared, with tears in her faded eyes, that Mr. Duke had nearly killed her son. And Mr. Duke retorted by saying he hadn't touched him yet, but could kill the whole family in two shakes. The officers in vain endeavored to get in a question, but no one would listen to them, and growing weary of so much nonsense they released Mr. Duke and were about to leave the room, when the old man—the father of the firm—called them back and told them to take Mr. Duke into custody.

"What for?" demanded the shopwalker. "Yes! that's it, what for?" repeated the whole crowd of us, he has done nothing wrong.

One of the policemen who from his stripes was evidently a superior officer, here remarked, "that if we would keep quiet he would see what could be done in the matter."

Mr. Duke himself also appealed to us for silence, and this had the desired effect, for there was not one of us but

what regarded him as a perfect hero. When order had been obtained, the officer turned to the boss and inquired the meaning of all the row.

"You tell him, father," said Mr. B——. B—— senior thereupon began to tell how the family had just taken their seats at the supper table, when a knock came at the door, and upon his son saying "come in," all the employés of the house marched in, each carrying a plate of cheese--here someone remarked, *sotto voce*, "don't call it names,"—and when asked the meaning of such a proceeding, a general uproar ensued, and several hard names were exchanged; one thing brought on another until at last Mr. Duke threatened to thrash my son and was about to put his threat into execution when you arrived."

"Now for our version of the affair," said Mr. Duke, as the old man finished speaking. "Mr. Officer, you see this stuff and he pointed to one of the wriggling masses; it looks and moves like MAGGOTS, but as Mr. B—— has honored it with the name of "CHEESE," I'll do the same just for convenience. Well, that's the sort of "tack" that was put on our table downstairs for supper to-night, and as the food provided for our meals this last six weeks, or more, has been nothing else but salt pork and such stuff as this—although I admit, this is the worst—we thought it time to strike for a change. Now we thought it possible Mr. B—— did not know such a state of affairs existed, and accordingly we took this method of acquainting him with the real fact. This however, we found was not necessary, for his conduct here a few minutes ago proved beyond a doubt he had known all about it, and he in his wrath at us for making a kick against such fare,

so far forgot himself as to use most obscene language towards us and many of us you will observe, are young ladies—the girls finding things were now quiet, and unable to control their curiosity, had again entered the room—and I, as any man would have done, resented it by informing Mr. B—— that if he did not retract it, I would thrash him, and you can bet I would have done it, too. That Mr. Officer, is the whole truth of the matter, and I have at least sixty witnesses here to prove it."

Well, I don't think you will need any of them, for now I have heard the story I shall not interfere. I have no authority to act in the matter anyway, and you Mr. B——, if you want to push the thing any further must get a warrant, good night.

Mr. B—— somewhat nettled by the officers' coolness, took their numbers and said he would see about it in the morning, and then dismissed them. After the policemen had left the room, Mr. Duke quietly remarked: "If you are wise Mr. B——, you will do nothing of the kind, for to do so will cause the infamous way your employés have been treated to become known all over London, and this you cannot afford to have happen, for if it was once made public that you had dared to provide such vile stuff as this for our consumption, there is not a man or woman in all London, that would spend a penny in your establishment. And now I have something else to say to you, and that is, if we do not immediately have a change of diet, to-morrow at noon, every assistant in this house will walk out of it, and when the newspaper men make their inquiries, we will tell the 'truth,' and also make an exhibit or two; see this?" And Mr. Duke

drew out the can we had shortly before seen him fill with the offensive cheese, and removing the lid quietly remarked to Mr. B——: "I shall label this EXHIBIT NUMBER ONE, and if it becomes necessary to show it, you can rest assured it will be done. Now sir, we have stated our terms to you and wait to hear whether you accept them."

At first Mr. B——, smarting under the attack made by Mr. Duke, was inclined to treat the matter in a high handed manner, but his father and brother seeing that we were evidently in earnest, restrained him, and after quietly requesting us to leave the room, said they would talk the matter over and let us know more about it in the morning. "In the morning be hanged," cried Mr. Duke, "we want supper to night; don't you see we are starving?"

Mrs. B—— rang the bell, and on the servant putting in an appearance, gave orders for another cheese to be put on the table of the assistants' dining room. When we heard this we departed quietly enough, and made a second and more successful attempt to satisfy our hunger. Next day came and everybody was waiting for twelve o'clock to arrive, when it did, Mr. Duke went down into the kitchen to investigate, and came back to inform us we were to be regaled upon substantial roast beef once more.

But the incident leaked out, and whether or no it did any of them any injury, certain it is that from that day forth their trade fell off, and inside of three months, the two miserable curs who had treated us in such an outrageous manner, were given a chance themselves to find out what it was like to go hungry, for they were by that time both back again behind the counter.

When Mr. Sansome had concluded and the applause which greeted him had died away, Mr. Lane rose to propose the health of the two gentlemen who had that evening contributed so greatly to our entertainment; and may the time be not far distant when we would again be interested by listening to more of the experiences of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Sansome.

After this had been drank, Mr. Johnson once more proposed the health and success of our genial host, remarking that had it not been for him the company would neither have feasted on such good things, nor have been amused by the yarns offering such a contrast thereto.

After this had been drank, the crowd dispersed, loudly singing, "For he's a jolly good fellow," and went home to bed to dream of roast turkey and "boiled baby," delicious salads and "salt horse," and many other things—calculated to either turn the stomach of a draper's assistant or make his mouth water—only to wake and find it raining, and nothing for their breakfast but stale bread and butter, and weak tea.

Why a London Draper Passed as an American Citizen.

A few nights after the banquet I walked into the club room just in time to see the "American" rise to his feet in response to a call from the chairman. Without any ceremony he began by saying: Gentlemen, you have just heard the chairman address me as the "American," and although I am an Englishman born and bred, it is not without feelings of thankfulness that I remember an occasion when by passing as an "American" I got out of a most unenviable predicament. If every gentleman will fill his glass and make himself comfortable, I will do my best to interest you with an account of the adventure I once had which induced me to temporarily become an "American." In my wanderings about the United States, I once found myself in Galveston, Texas. I was working in a store, as they call the shops there—and I may as well add that with the permission of the audience I will use American terms in relating this incident—I was working in a store which ranked first in the city, but unlike the same class of houses in most cities of its size, this one did not close at six o'clock, but kept open as long as there were any customers about. Sometimes it would be seven o'clock, sometimes eight, and frequently nine before we left the store; consequently, we could make no engagement for any exact time. Situated as I was without any relatives or friends to spend the evenings with

it was not unnatural for me to occasionally find myself seeking the comforts and amusements offered by the saloon and billiard-hall. Now one place above all others, by reason of its being made the headquarters of seafaring men—my father you will remember was a sea-captain himself—attracted me, and many pleasant nights have I spent in the company of these gentlemen. The first thing they did on getting ashore, was to hunt up the "Exchange" and take possession of all the billiard and pool tables in the house. And as most of you are unacquainted with American billiard and pool tables, I will briefly describe them. The pool tables are in every particular made the same as our English billiard tables, with one exception, that is they are only about one-half as large; the billiard tables are the same as those used in France, and they differ from the pool table by being constructed without pockets.

One night I was sitting in the "Exchange" watching four sailors trying to play English billiards on a pool-table, while two young Americans were playing American billiards near by. To a stranger the latter game at first looks quite uninteresting, as they count nothing but "caroms," or as we call them "cannons," the result is a game of fifty up, takes about three times as long to play as a game of the same number of points in English billiards; therefore, as I have said before, a stranger to the game is apt to grow tired and lose interest in it before it is out. In the next chair to the one occupied by me, sat a gentleman evidently a stranger to the game, for every little while he would turn to me for some information respecting it.

"Why do they play with four balls?" he inquired.

"Oh, because they are not very expert, and to use only three would lessen their chances of rapid scoring," I replied.

Now, I was always on the lookout for fellow-countrymen, and after my neighbor had put a few more questions to me, I sized him up for an Englishman, and asked him if it were not the case?

"Yes; that is I was born in England, but for some twenty years past have lived in the West Indies, and having there made a fortune I am now on a tour through this country."

When we had become a little better acquainted I inquired what business he had engaged in to make a fortune so quickly, for he was a man not over forty.

"Oh, the dry-goods, chiefly."

On hearing this I became quite interested in my chance acquaintance, and put several questions to him with a view of finding out what chance there was for a good man in such an out-of-the-way part of the world.

"So you are in the same line of business, are you?"

"Yes, I am working for so and so."

"Well, do you want to make a change?" he inquired. "Because if you do, and do not want too big a salary, I like you and think I can give you a pretty good berth, as I intend to enlarge my establishment when I go back."

This tickled me and I assured him nothing could give me greater pleasure than to accept his position if we could come to terms, and he could wait a little while for me, as I was under a six month's contract with my present employers.

"Well, I can soon tell you if we can come to terms, if you will state what you expect to get. And as for waiting, I shall not be ready to receive you for at least another two months."

Well, I said, I am getting a salary of $75 a month at present, and of course would not make a change unless by so doing I could better myself.

"Whew! $75 a month is a very large salary for a clerk to earn in the West Indies; but tell me"—as though a sudden thought had struck him—"how much does it cost you to live here?"

I told him $30 a month would about cover the cost of living. "Well!" said he, "if I agree to give you $75 a month and guarantee to get you board and lodging for $15, you will be making a gain of $15 a month by the change, and I think you might safely call that "bettering yourself;" and if these terms will suit you I'll give you a position on the first of May."

I thanked him for his offer and asked to be allowed till next day to think it over.

"Certainly," he replied. "Meet me here about this time to-morrow evening, and if you conclude to try it, we will then make all the other arrangements necessary. What is your name?"

"Pole."

"Mr. Pole, mine is Cambourne." We then shook hands and parted.

Next day I told one of the fellows in the same store with me, of the offer that had been made to me and asked him what he thought of it?

"Think of it? why I think you are the luckiest dog I know. and if your head's level you will close with him at once, If you don't, for God's sake introduce me to him and let me get a show; for nothing would please me more than a trip to the West Indies."

Well, to make a long story short, I finally concluded to accept Mr. Cambourne's offer, and accordingly as soon as the store closed, hurried off to the Exchange. Passing through the bar—without taking a drink even—I entered the billiard hall, and the first man I saw was my prospective employer. He saw me coming and rose to meet me with his hand extended which of course I took. Then we found a couple of seats in a quiet corner of the room and he at once ordered the drinks and came to the point.

"Well Mr. Pole, have you considered my proposal?"

"Yes sir, and have decided to accept it, on condition that you pay my passage to the place you wish me to go."

"Whew!" he exclaimed; "I don't think I can promise that much."

"Well sir," said I, "if you can't, the whole matter must drop; for I tell you candidly, I have not as much money in the world as would be required."

Mr. Cambourne on hearing this, sat still a few minutes, and it was evident to me that he was thinking the matter over and trying to devise some means by which we could come to terms. As I watched him, I began to grow impatient for him to speak, and when at length he did, I was rejoiced to find that he had thought of a way out of the difficulty; for now that I had set my heart on going, it would have been a great disappointment to me, to find such a thing impossible; therefore, I say, I was rejoiced when he said: "Well! I'll tell you what I'll do; I will pay your expenses to Barbados, and afterwards deduct it from your salary at the rate of $30 per month. This is all I have to say in the matter; if it suits you all right; if it does not,

why then I am very sorry, for it is the very best offer I can make you."

Knowing from the tone in which this had been said, it was intended as an ultimatum, and not wishing to lose such an opportunity as this to visit the island, I, after a few moments thought over the proposed terms, at last accepted.

This being settled, he informed me that in order to reach Barbados by the first of May, it would be necessary for me to start from Galveston in the early part of April; for, he added. "I intend to go by way of New York; the accommodations offered by the steamships running from that port being superior to those of other vessels. So if you meet me in New York we will go down together.

As he finished speaking, Mr. Cambourne drew out his pocket-book, and taking two intercolonial notes of £5 each, therefrom, handed them to me, stating that this amount would pay my fare to New York, either by rail or by the Mallory line of steamships; then, adding he would write and let me know where I could find him in New York, shook hands with me and before I could recover from my surprise he had gone.

When I found myself in my room that night, I took out the notes he had given me and had another look at them; as I did so the thought struck me, what if they were bogus? for of course, I who had never before seen any, did not know a genuine one from a counterfeit. The more I thought of this, the more it worried me; then again the man had acted so off-hand in the whole affair and treated the thing so carelessly, not even taking the trouble to look up my antecedents, that I began to think I had been fooled. But why

should I care? thought I; I shan't lose anything, for I still have my berth, and the firm does not know of any intention on my part to sever my connection. Somewhat reassured by this thought, I got into bed and good notes or bad, I did not lose any sleep over them.

Next day, while on my lunch hour, I went round to the foreign exchange and made inquiries. On showing my notes and asking if they were all O. K., I was relieved to hear that they were.

"Do you wish to exchange them for United States currency?"

"No thank you;" for what would have been the use of my paying them a commission to do this, when by keeping them until I arrived in the West Indies, I could obtain full value for them?

The time that had to pass between now and the end of March, hung like ages; and I began to grow impatient for the day to arrive when I could throw up my present berth and start on the way to my new one.

About two weeks had elapsed since Mr. Cambourne had left Galveston; when one morning I was somewhat surprised to find a letter from him waiting for me. I nervously tore it open, and the first thing I saw, was another lot of bank notes similar to those already in my possession; guessing something was up, I hastened to find out what it was, by reading the letter. I have it with me at the present time and can therefore give you the exact words:

GRAND PACIFIC HOTEL,
CHICAGO, ILL., March 10th, 18—.

MR. POLE—*Dear Sir:* Having just received a cablegram from Barbados informing me of an important matter, it

becomes necessary for me to return home at once. I very much regret, we shall therefore be unable to make the trip together, as I had so much desired and as we had agreed to do. But it cannot be helped and we shall have to make the best of it by going alone. Enclosed you will find three £5 notes, which together with the two I have already advanced you will make a total of £25 or about $125. I have inquired about the rates from New York to Barbados and find that it will cost you $60 for a saloon passage, you will therefore have $15 to meet all expenses incidental to the voyage, which I sincerely trust will be in every respect a pleasant one. Respectfully Yours,

WILLIAM CAMBOURNE.

When I finished reading this letter, I folded it up and placed it with the bills in my pocket-book, and it was fortunate that I did so, as you will presently see if you listen carefully to the rest of my yarn. I was not at all annoyed at the turn things had taken; on the contrary, indeed, I was rather pleased that it was so, for now I would be left to do as I wished on the trip, but if Mr. Cambourne had been with me, I should, in a measure, have felt bound to do what he did; and as my tastes and inclinations differ in many respects from those of most people, I congratulated myself upon being able to make the voyage alone, thereby avoiding any possibility of gaining the displeasure of my employer.

The day set for my departure at last arrived, and winding up my affairs in Galveston, I jumped on board a Mallory line steamer and started for New York, where I was to take another steamship belonging to the United States and Brazil Mail Steamship Company.

The trip from Galveston to New York was both tedious and uninteresting, nothing whatever happening to amuse the passengers; in fact, the last three days of the voyage were rendered all the more miserable on account of the death of a little child whose parents were on board. This death, coming as it did at such a time, only served to throw a still greater gloom and dullness over the entire ship, and I was devoutly thankful when I awoke one morning to find the vessel tied up at her wharf in New York.

Not waiting to have any breakfast, I hurried ashore and made my way to Brooklyn, from where the "Advance" was to sail at noon of the same day, and promptly on time she fired her gun and we were off. Having got myself and things into some kind of shape, I started in to find out who and what my fellow passengers were, where they were going to and anything else. Only two besides myself were going to Barbados. These were an old gentleman and his son, who were interested in a sugar plantation. Several ladies and gentlemen, I found, were going to Rio de Janeiro, just for the trip or their health's sake. One man was going to leave us at St. Thomas, while two others were going to seek a fortune in Montevideo. Among the passengers and occupying the same state room as myself, was a young man with a brown beard and mustache; chiefly remarkable for keeping his mouth shut, except at meal times, when he showed great activity in this direction. Never did I see him talking to a single person on the ship, and not even to myself who occupied the same berth with him, did he say a word until we had left Newport News, a place on the Virginia coast, remarkable for nothing, as yet, except a huge elevator, which

the dusky inhabitants take great delight in telling you, upon every possible occasion, is the largest in the world. After we left this place, where we had put in to receive the late mails and complete our cargo. I made up my mind to sound my silent partner, and if possible find out something about him. Accordingly, next day after lunch I followed him into the state-room where he was in the habit of retiring to sleep or read until dinner time. Taking up a paper I pretended to read, but in reality was trying to think of something to say by which I could start a conversation. For two or three minutes I lay in my bunk engaged in this way, and was about to say something—what it was I don't remember—when I was surprised to hear my partner ask me where I was bound for?

"Barbados. Where are you going?"

"Buenos Ayres," he replied.

"What's your business?" I asked.

"Doctor. What's yours?"

"Dry-goods clerk."

"What are you going to do in Barbados?"

"Follow my business."

"Got a job?

"Yes. What are you going to do in Buenos Ayres?"

"Well, I'll tell you. You see I am not a regular doctor, but make up all sorts of compounds and sell them on the streets; in short, I am a 'gentleman fakir.' Look here," he cried, drawing a small trunk from under his bed, "see this," and he held up an one ounce vial containing some black liquid.

"Yes, I see it; what is it?"

"Mostly tar," he answered. Then pointing to his trunk, said, "there are two hundred of these bottles there; and they cost me, with their contents, just three dollars, but I shall sell them for a hundred dollars."

I stared at him, and inquired what on earth he was going to take small bottles of tar to Buenos Ayres for?

"I am not going to take them to Buenos Ayres," he replied. "Oh, no! I don't have to take them so far as that. I have other intentions, and if you will keep your mouth closed, I will disclose them to you."

I promised an oyster-like dumbness, and he began by saying: "Don't you know that a nigger would sell his soul to the devil, if by so doing he could make his hair straight as yours?"

I confessed that I had known niggers to show a weakness for straight hair.

"Well!" he said, "The stuff in these bottles will take every bit of kink right out of their heads, and——"

But, I interrupted "If it is chiefly tar, won't it take the hair out of their heads?"

"That's what I said; ain't it?" queried the Yankee. "How could it take every kink clean out of their heads, without taking the hair out?" "Ain't a nigger's hair all kinks?" he laughingly said.

"But surely you wouldn't sell the poor devils such stuff as this it would be a crime."

"Oh no, it won't be a crime unless I am caught, and you can bet your life I won't be caught. Oh, no! not much." This cool way of putting it made me smile in spite of my conscientious scruples and I felt almost ashamed for displaying them and told him to go on.

"When we get to St. Thomas, we shall put in to coal, and will probably be there five or six hours; now my scheme is this, as soon as we arrive, I shall go ashore and find the best corner in town; then I shall get a nigger boy with his hair as long as possible, give him a quarter, and tell him what I want him to do, which will be to stand upon a dry goods box and hold my bottles, whilst I take the kinks out of his hair. At this the African will show his teeth and go through several other performances indicating his great joy. As soon as I begin to talk the crowd will come around and nearly everyone in it will be a nigger, and when they see me straighten out that boy's hair, they will "just throw" their two Kroner pieces at me for all they are worth, and I expect to sell out my entire stock in fifteen minutes. Now the reason I am keeping myself so much in here, is, that if I mixed with the other passengers they might get onto my racket; hello! is that a ship we are passing?" he exclaimed. I turned my head to look through the light but could see nothing. When I turned around again, I started violently; for instead of finding my partner in his bunk, another man entirely, sat there grinning at me. "You don't know me?" "That is good." "Do you know me now?" and as he spoke he put on his whiskers and mustache again; which, until this very moment I had never discovered to be false. Then he quietly remarked, "these things are necessary sometimes when a fellow goes into the 'kink removing business.'"

From that on we were the best of friends, but no other person on the vessel ever got an idea of it; for at meal times the grave young man with the brown whiskers and mustache, as was usual with him, spoke never a word either to

me or anyone else. My traveling companion, now that I knew his secret, used to sleep with his "whiskers on a nail" instead of on his face; and precious glad he was to be able to make the change.

One evening after dinner I was pacing the deck in conversation with the second officer, and trying to discover the southern cross. After I had traced it out, the officer told me that they expected to sight the island of St. Thomas early next morning, and would probably make the port about noon. Now, knowing of my companion's scheme I hastened off to find him and inform him of our nearness to the place where he expected to dispose of his "kink remover." I found him as usual lying in his bunk, smoking a cigar and reading an old newspaper. But when I informed him of what the officer had stated to me, he immediately sprang out of his berth and began to remove the bottles from his trunk and pack them in a small leather satchel. After this was completed to his satisfaction, he lit another cigar, and I lit my pipe, and we then lay down in our bunks until the weed had been consumed and a few yarns exchanged, when we turned our faces to the ocean and went to sleep. Next morning as I lay awake in my narrow bed, watching the sun rise and wondering if my new berth would turn out as well as expected, I was suddenly startled by the sound of many shouts and much scampering of feet overhead. I raised myself upon my elbow and listened for any further sounds; and my partner, who had been awakened by the noise, mechanically reached out for his beard, and in a second had it on, but not until then did he venture to inquire of me the cause of the disturbance. I was about to

tell him I did not know, but before I could do so we heard the welcome cry of: "Land!" "Land!" echoing through the saloon, down the passages and through every nook and corner of the great fabric.

"Thank God for that," remarked my friend, looking at his watch, "and, as it is only a little after five o'clock I am going to take another nap," and off came his "hirsute adornment" to find another resting place on the nail. Finding nothing better to do I also, after closing the deadlight to keep the rays of the rising sun out, covered myself up and sank again into sweet oblivion. No one can tell how long we would have slept had it not been for one of the stewards knocking on the stateroom door and shouting out if we wanted any breakfast to get up at once, it's half past nine.

Of course we wanted some breakfast we had paid for it, and might just as well eat it; so springing out of bed, we hastily dressed ourselves and made our way to the saloon.

When we arrived there, everyone was in that state of great excitement usual on board a big steamship when land has been sightest for the first time. Many had swallowed a cup of coffee: and grabbing a roll or a piece of bread, rushed upon deck to gaze at the distant island; but whatever they could find in it of sufficient interest—for at this time, it appeared to be nothing but a large rock rising upon the horizon—to take them so soon away from the very substantial meal prepared for us, I am at a loss to know; but I am willing to bet anything that not one of them had ever been a draper's assistant, for they never allow any chance to hide good "body-lining" to pass unheeded.

By eleven o'clock we could see the graceful white houses

as they rose one row above the other in interesting terraces, and, rushing along, as we were, at a speed of thirteen hnots, we could plainly see that the second officer, when he had told us of the time we might expect to arrive, had not been very far out of his reckoning, and so it proved, for exactly at noon the engines were stopped, the screw given a rest, and the "Advance" dropped her anchor in the beautiful harbor of St. Thomas. No sooner had she come to rest than the doctor's steam launch came alongside, and in less time than it takes to tell, we were surrounded by boats, the dusky occupants of which kept up a perpetual din in their endeavors to secure the patronage of those wishing to go ashore, for you see we were anchored nearly a mile from the wharf. One old negro was particularly interesting, his hair, which he used as his chief advertisement, was very long and almost as white as snow.

"Want to go ashore, ladies and gentlemen?" "I'll row you ashore ladies and gentlemen." "Real hair, ladies and gentlemen." "Oldest man on the island, ladies and gentlemen; born here ninety-five years ago, ladies and gentlemen." "Row you ashore in ten minutes, ladies and gentlemen." "Strong arms, ladies and gentlemen." "Show you round the island in good style, ladies and gentlemen."

This ancient nigger would probably have gone on telling the "ladies and gentlemen" what he could do for them, for another hour or so, had not a gentleman asked him:

"How much will you take me ashore for?"

"Five shillings, sir," he replied.

"I'll give you a bob," exclaimed the passenger.

He had evidently been to St. Thomas before and knew the

natives, for his offer was at once accepted by the "study in black and white." A start having thus been made and the price for landing settled upon, there was a great rush among the passengers wishing to see the island to secure seats, and the other boatmen, taking advantage of this circumstance, drew alongside, and in a very few moments at least a dozen boat loads had started for the shore.

While all this had been taking place on the starboard side of the vessel, my friend the Doctor had quietly gone over to the port-side, and hailing a boatman, handed him his satchel and told him that if he got ashore first he would give him a dollar. This the darky promised to do, and he accomplished it easy enough, for while the crowd were laughing at the white-haired descendent of Ham, the Doctor got a start of several minutes. How and where he managed to remove his whiskers, I do not know, but certain it was after getting ashore. I soon run across him standing on a box, with his clean shaven face wearing a smile, and a little negro boy holding his satchel of bottles. Already a curious and lazy crowd of loafing niggers were gathered about him. Curious to see what he would do and how he would do it, I fell off from the crowd that had left the "Advance" to inspect the island, and took a seat in the doorway of a neighboring ice-house commanding a good view of the proceedings. In a very few moments a tremendous crowd of niggers, both men and women, swarmed about the Doctor, who was now busily engaged annointing the head of his innocent victim. As I thought how soon that grin of delight upon the poor, little wretch's face would be changed for a howl of pain and rage, I felt sorry for him, but still I could not repress a smile.

Presently the "gentleman fakir," who had by this time rubbed the rubbish well into the youthful African's hair, began to spout: "Ladies and gentlemen," I heard him say, "I hold here in my had the greatest discovery of the age, and one calculated to become a boon and blessing to the civilized world of colored people. It is known as 'Cetewayo's Kink Remover," and has been in use by that great king and warrior; also, by his many beautiful wives, for many years past. It never fails to straighten the hair of any negro; rendering it as soft and pliable as that of the fairest woman in this world. If you will watch me for a few moments I will show you how this wonderful dressing acts upon the hair of this boy, who I think must be known to everyone in my audience."

As he finished speaking the "Doctor" worked the stuff a little more into the lads hair; then taking the longest curl he could find, the smiling fakir drew it slowly through his fingers, amid the frantic shouts of his delighted audience, who by this time had got themselves worked up to a great pitch of excitement, and were already loudly inquiring the price of the famous "Cetewayo's Kink Remover." With a confident smile the wary "Doctor" put out his hand and told them to keep quiet and not part with their money until they had seen all that it would do for them. Then he took a small brush and comb from his pocket, and in a few seconds had fixed that kid's wool so straight that no one would have believed it had been full of kinks ten minutes before.

As the "Doctor" had told me they would, the excited mob fairly rushed upon him in their endeavor to get a bottle of

the precious liquid. Strong men elbowed their way to the stand, holding the price of the coveted article high above their heads. Little men wriggled themselves to the front and pressed their coins upon the delighted fakir, who assured them that there was enough for all. "Don't push, gentlemen, you will all get some if you will only take your time." The women stood to one side, loudly calling upon their husbands and friends to procure them a bottle as well.

In all my life I never saw such a ready willingness on the part of any one to get rid of their money, and in less than ten minutes the "fakir" had sold out his entire stock, and the happy possessors rushed off to their homes to try the effect. Many who had too far to go, or had not the patience to wait until they got home, began to pour the liquid on their heads even where they stood.

In the excitement which ensued the "Doctor" sneaked off somewhere to adjust his beard; and having accomplished this without any one observing him, he soon, much to my srprise at his hardihood, joined me at the ice-house.

"Aren't you afraid to be seen hanging about?" I inquired.

"Afraid!" he repeated, "what have I to be afraid of?"

"Why, when those poor devils find out how they have been robbed and injured, they will grow furious, and if they ever lay hands upon you, I pity you.

"Well! you see, 'those poor devils,' as you call 'em, *won't find out* how they have been *robbed and injured* for four hours and by that time we shall have left the port."

"I hope for your sake it will be so," I remarked, and then the matter dropped and we devoted ourselves to cooling drinks and cigars. After we had been sitting in the ice-

house for half an hour or so, a negro entered, and catching sight of us, asked if we had come on the same boat as the "White Doctor?"

I dared not trust myself to answer, but left my companion to do so himself. We came on the "Advance" if that is the ship you mean? But we did not know any doctor that came on her except the regular ship's surgeon. When the darky heard this, he hid his teeth behind his massive lips, and his face at once assumed the elongated proportions of a fiddle. Observing this sudden change in his features, the "faker" asked the cause of it.

"Why you see, sir," began the darky in reply; "I bought a bottle of his "kink remover" and took it home, and put it on my hair, and you see what it has done for me; my hair was as kinky as that niggers over there, this morning; now look at it. We looked, and sure enough it was as straight as mine.

"Well, that's nothing to be worried about, is it?" cried the "Doctor."

"Oh, no sir!" he replied; again allowing his teeth to appear; "that ain't anything to be sorry for, only my wife said: that if I don't get another bottle she won't live with me; that would be something to be sorry for I can tell you;" and once more the teeth disappeared;

We allowed there was some little truth in his last remark, but could do nothing for him except advise him to find a fellow with a willingness to part with his bottle, and thereby prevent his conjugal bliss from being shattered.

When the wretched nigger had left us, my companiou gave me the wink and said: "Poor devil, I almost pity him my-

self; but wait a little while and he'll pity himself a darned sight worse than I do."

Although this remark was cruel in the extreme, I was provoked to laughter at the cool and unconcerned manner in which the Yankee had made it. Just as the "Doctor" had ordered more drinks and cigars, we heard a tremendous shouting in the street. "What the devil is the matter?" cried the "fakir," starting to the door in evident alarm, for neither of us were able to tell whether it was a "hurrah" or a "yell of rage" that went up from the crowd. I followed my friend to the door, and from there I saw; marching down the principal street of the island, a long procession of niggers, every one of them were carrying their hats in their hands shouting three cheers for the "White Doctor," and then came another yell similar to the one which had a few moments before startled my companion. The "Doctor," much relieved by this exhibition of joy from his late customers, fairly shook with laughter at the mob, who halted on reaching the ice-house, which was made the headquarters of all the white population. Here, supposing no doubt to find the "Doctor," cheer after cheer was sent up by the happy and excited nigggers, many of whom were already looking with disdain upon those of their color who had not been fortunate enough to obtain a bottle of the precious liquid. This din was kept up for about half an hour, and then the straight-haired negroes moved on to pay a visit to the next ice-house. As I stood in the doorway watching the retreating crowd, my attention was attracted by the boy upon whose head my traveling companion had so successfully operated. Suddenly falling behind the parade, he

snatched off his hat and carefully felt his head. Perhaps, thought I, he is afraid of the kinks so recently transformed into shining straight hair regaining their original curl, and was feeling to assure himself that such was not the case. Whatever the thoughts running through his soon to be painful head, I do no know, but he had not gone a dozen yards after replacing his hat, when off it came again and the same amount of careful feeling administered to his head. Dispelling my former thoughts of any fear he might have had for the continuance of his newly found straightness of hair. I now saw what the real matter was, and whispered to my friend to take a look at the kid, who, until now had been unobserved by the "Doctor."

When he did so, he cried: "Let us get aboard at once, the darned stuff is getting its work in before I expected, and in an hour at the most that mob will be howling with pain and rage instead of pride and joy."

We lost no time in hiring a boatman to take us back to the "Advance," and, arriving there the "Doctor" immediately went below, and I remained on deck to watch the unfortunate negresses loading the huge bunkers with coal, which they carried on their heads without touching it in anyway whatever with their hands. On making some inquiries I learned that these miserable wretches received but a half-penny per basket for all they carried from the floating wharf, down a gang-plank to the ship's side; and as they could not possibly have made more than two trips in five minutes, you can imagine the scanty compensation they received for their labor. At length, growing tired of watching the half-naked lot of women, I went to look after my

companion. As soon as I entered the berth he asked me if they were coming?

I told him I had seen no signs of them so far, and he breathed a sigh of relief. "I hope to God we get off before they find it out. Not but what I am safe enough in my disguise, but I don't want to see any trouble over the business."

Another hour went by and the passengers who had gone ashore, had now all returned, and the chief—I might say—the only topic discussed by them was the straight-haired niggers they had just left on the island.

In a short while the coal bunkers were full and the officers were giving their orders to the crew, to make the necessary preparations for leaving the port, when we were suddenly startled by a terrific yell coming from the shore. I guessed at once what it meant and so did the "Doctor" who stood at my side, when he found we were so soon to start; but the rest of the passengers mistook it for a parting cheer, given in honor of the white doctor who had brought such great happiness to their island. The yell had no sooner died away, however, before we saw the crowd of colored people rush down to the water's edge and make for the boats moored along side. We saw some jump into these, while others began to shovel stones from piles along the wharf into them; but none except the fakir and myself could define the true cause of this mysterious proceeding. Never in my life did I see men row like these infuriated negroes; some had one oar and some two; but that made no difference; on and on they came, every stroke of their stout and dark arms bringing them nearer to the ship.

As they drew close enough for us to be able to distinguish

what they were saying, we heard such cries as "kill the d—— Yank!" "cut his heart out!" "burn him!" "sink the ship!" and many other direful exclamations. Now it was I was given a chance to witness the cast-iron nerve of my companion; for during all these shouts he had stood by my side quietly smoking a cigar, and every little while cracking a joke at some poor nigger who in his frantic efforts to outrow his fellow citizens, would frequently catch a crab.

The captain not having heard anything of the incident, was somewhat surprised to see the rapidly advancing fleet, and called an officer to give him some explanation of the affair. The officer however knew no more than the captain and said so. But before he could question a bystander the boats had reached the ship's side and their dusky and maddened occupants with one voice demanded the "Doctor" who had sold them the "kink remover."

"Look here," they shouted, removing their hats—those of them who still had them on—"look at our hair, look at it;" as they spoke many of them put their hands to their heads, and taking hold of a handful of hair, they pulled it clean away from their painful pates, leaving the scalp as bare as the soles of their feet. "Captain!" they cried to that gentleman who was gazing at this performance from the bridge; "Give us that d—— 'Yank' or we will sink your ship."

Nearly everybody now became more or less excited, and the coolest man on the ship was the one who had served them the trick and was the means of causing all the trouble. One or two very ugly maiden ladies fainted, or pretended to; no doubt feeling sure of having a man's arm around their waist for once in their lives if they did so, and stewards and

waiters were kept busy bringing restoratives. While the spinsters were regaining consciousness, the captain almost burning with rage, demanded of the niggers "what they meant by such threats?"

"What do we mean?" exclaimed one of them. "Why this is what we mean, look at my head; look at all of our heads; in a few minutes we won't one of us have any hair at all. This d—— 'Yank' came ashore this afternoon and calling himself a 'doctor' sold us some stuff to take the kinks out of our hair and this is what it has done, and we want to take revenge on him so hand him over." The captain on hearing the man's story allowed his wrath to be changed for indignation, and sending for the purser inquired of him if any doctor had come on the vessel?

"Only Mr. Fees, the ship's surgeon sir?"

"Are you sure?"

"Quite certain sir."

"Then let the man come aboard and see if he can pick out the scoundrel who served them the shameful trick." On being granted this permission, the nigger who had acted as spokesman, lost no time in getting on deck to begin his search. Slowly he walked around looking every man in the face, but of course none could he find in the least resembling the "fakir" who had sold them "Cetewayo's Kink Remover."

"He ain't among these captain, and I expect he has hidden himself somewhere below." The captain then gave orders to the purser to call the passenger's names from the ship's book, and told every man to answer when he heard his name mentioned. This was accordingly done; but no name sounded without a response being made to it.

The captain, evidently satisfied in his own mind that the niggers had been mistaken in supposing the man who had sold them the "kink remover" had come to the island on his vessel, at once ordered the unsuccessful nigger to leave the ship. The other negroes growing furious at finding their leader thus summarily dismissed, again began to call loudly for the d—— "Yank." Still further provoked by the derisive laughter with which their demand was received, a woman—who had really possessed a fine head of hair for a negress—hurled a huge stone at the second officer, who was leaning over the gunwale with a look of great amusement on his face, fortunately, however, it missed him and fell into the sea on the other side of the ship. Although no damage had been done this act was the means of opening up hostilities, and the howling mob having at last found a leader, and that a woman, lost no time in following her example, for no sooner had the stone left her hand than a dozen or more were simultaneously thrown on deck. Finding things were likely to grow serious, the captain gave orders for the ship to be at once started; and much to our relief we soon heard the screw lashing the waters of the bay into a fury, but it was nothing to be compared with the fury of the frenzied mob of niggers. For several hundred yards many of the boats followed us, and those of their occupants who were not engaged in rowing, kept up a perfect fusilade of stones, but fortunately none of them did any harm beyond the breaking of a few lights. Weary with their futile efforts and finding we were rapidly getting beyond range, they at length abandoned the chase and returned to the island, there to mourn the loss of their wool, with their moulting companions.

The incident, of course, formed the chief subject of conversation for the next two days, when I was overjoyed to find that we were nearing my destination. Night, however, came on before we got near enough to gather any idea of its appearance by daylight, and not before twelve o'clock did we enter the harbor and drop our anchor.

It was only the work of a very few minutes to transfer the mails and baggage to the two boats that had long been waiting our arrival.

As in St. Thomas these boats were manned by negroes, who did their work with the usual amount of noise and confusion. None of us could possibly tell who had charge of the job; every man seemed to take the command in turns. Now a little fellow in a white duck suit would do all the bossing; then a big black fellow wearing nothing but an old pair of pants and a coarse sack with holes cut for his head and arms, would do the swearing. And so it went on, one would tell us three unlucky whites to sit in the stern, and no sooner had we crawled there when another would turn us out and say the stern was always reserved for the mails. We found another seat forward, and then the big black fellow told us we had no business in that boat at all as it was going to take the mails and baggage ashore. Finally we were settled and the boat with our trunks and the mails aboard pulled off from our side in the direction of the custom-house, and we soon landed on the wharf.

When we did so I really expected our time had come, for as soon as our feet had fairly touched terra firma a whole army of niggers swooped down upon us and did not hesitate to take hold of us. We were grabbed from behind, yanked

forward, pushed sideways, lifted off our feet, and the deuce knows what all.

From the nature of their wild shouts we gathered they were what are known to the traveling world as "hotel touts." Not the kind of "tout" you find at our fashionable watering places, who politely hand you a card, and then does not care if he ever sees you again or not, but a real live, energetic tout who would carry you to the hotel on his back, rather than see you go off with one of his rivals.

"Come with me, gentlemen, to the best hotel on the island," cried one.

"Don't you do it gentlemen, it ain't a hotel at all he wants to take you to; mine is the only hotel on the island fit for you, gentlemen, to go to."

I don't know what would have become of us, where we would have gone to, or in what condition we would have gone in, had it not been for the arrival upon the scene of a policeman. As the officer approached, the gang of touts instantly let go their hold upon us and spoke in lower and more respectful tones.

"Now then, what do all you men want here?" And turning to look at their faces, pointed them out one by one, and said: "You can go, and you, and you, and you," and so on until but two of them remained. "Gentlemen," said the policemen, "it's very late and you had better go with this man to the Albion, it is close by, and a first-class hotel; and you, Brown, can go." Brown, who was the defeated "tout," without a word of dissent thereupon walked off.

Tired as we were, we were glad to go anywhere to get a bed and some sleep; accordingly we started off with the vic-

torious runner and in two minutes reached the "Albion," and after a few hasty preparations had been made we went off to bed.

Next morning I got up and went out to look about the town, and get some idea of the place I had come to. It did not take me long to make an entire circle of the business portion and I had no difficulty in finding the house for which I had been engaged. Now I noticed that all other stores were open, and doing a brisk trade,—although it was not yet eight o'clock—but Cambournes was still closed. This struck me very favorably for I at once supposed that being the first class establishment of the place they did not open so early as the lower class houses.

Greatly pleased with my first impressions of the island, I returned to the hotel for breakfast, after which I set out again to report for business. When I reached the store however, I was surprised to find it still closed up and the blinds still down. Seeing an old man sitting in the shade of the doorway reading a paper, I approached him and inquired what time the store would open?

"What store?"

"Cambourne's."

"Cambourne's!" he cried, "Why Cambourne's won't open for quite a while, I reckon."

"Why not?"

"Why haven't you heard yet?"

I assured him I had heard nothing, having only reached the Island last night at twelve o'clock.

"Oh!" he said, "you came on the 'Advance' did you?" "Well then of course you don't know much about the affairs

of this place yet. Sit down and I'll tell you something; but first of all tell me what brought you to Barbados?"

I replied that I had met Mr. Cambourne in the United States some two months before, and he had offered me a position in his store, which I had come to fill.

"I am sorry for you, for neither you nor anyone else will ever take a position in a store of Mr. Cambourne's."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Because he ain't got any store; that's why."

"But, who owns this place here? I see Cambourne's name still over the door."

"Never mind what you see, young man, the British Government owns that store, and everything in it."

Fearing that some calamity was about to befall me, I hastened to inquire what the old man meant by all this wild talk.

"I mean this," he replied in measured tones, "William Cambourne has been arrested for forgery, and taken to England for trial. Now, is there anything else you want to know?"

Now, I am not in the habit of allowing myself to be surprised, but I must confess that when I heard this, you could have knocked me down with a feather, for I immediately guessed what he had forged.

My conjectures were confirmed when in answer to an inquiry from me, the old man said: "He had been caught forging inter-colonial bank-notes; and, in addition to this crime, an illicit whiskey still run by him had since been discovered; so your chances of ever working for Mr. Cambourne are very slim indeed, for if I know anything of British law and

justice, he will not be able to return to this island for at least fourteen years. Good morning," and before I could put another question to him the old man had left me.

A nice predicament I now found myself in. Here I was, several thousand miles away from home, and only a few dollars in my possession; for of course the notes given to me by Camboune were part of the forged ones. Under the existing circumstances, I concluded the "Albion" was a trifle finer hotel than was actually necessary, and I at once proceeded to that caravansary and settled my account.

This accomplished, the thought dawned upon me that as I had not come to the island for my health, it would be a good thing for the retention of that blessing, if I went to work and earned some *genuine notes* wherewith to defray the expenses incident to the possession of a large appetite. Accordingly the first house I saw engaged in our line of business, I entered and offered myself as a candidate for any vacancy they had. But they did not have a vacancy, the manager told me, and even if they had, it would have been impossible to have allowed me to fill it, "For," said he, "we make it a rule to engage all our assistants at home, in England, and bring them out here on a three year's engagement. He was very sorry for me, but even under the very extraordinary circumstances of my case, he could not break the regulation." The next I struck informed me that they already had too many salesmen, and as soon as the sugar crop was in they would dispense with the services of at least twenty of their assistants.

Four other houses offered no better chance of success, and now only two remained for me to apply at. These two I had

left till last, owing to the fact that when I had looked into them, I found at least half the employés were "decided brunettes," and, as was natural, I had no particular desire to work alongside these "swarthy fellows," if I could possibly avoid it. But, having been unsuccessful in my efforts to obtain employment in any store where these fellows were not engaged, and with the skeleton of my exchequer dancing before my eyes, it would have been folly on my part if I had stood on the color line. So into the best looking store of the two I sailed.

"Yes, we can put you to work at once," replied the engager, in answer to my inquiry. "How much do you want?"

"Well, how do you pay in this place, in 'dollars' or 'pounds?'"

"Both."

"Well, then, as I have been used to dollars for some years past, suppose you start me on seventy-five a month!"

"Seventy-five grandmothers," cried the engager; "do you know where you are?"

"Yes, unfortunately, I have a most decided knowledge of where I am."

"Well, then why do you come in here and ask for three men's salaries?"

"Three men's salaries?"

"Yes! Three men's salaries. Do you see all these men? Well, some of them only get fifteen dollars a month, and the highest paid to any is but forty dollars."

"But they are mostly negroes," I remarked sententiously.

"I know they are, and to tell you the truth, I prefer them to the whites. I'll tell you why. You see out of a popula-

tion of a hundred and fifty thousand at least a hundred thousand are colored, and it is only what one would expect to see them bestowing the most of their patronage upon their own race. The consequence is one of these colored men will often take double the amount of money a really good white man does, and therefore you will understand why I give them the preference."

"Well, sir, can't you make me an offer of some kind?"

"Yes, certainly, I'll give you the average salary paid to these men, twenty-five dollars a month."

"You will do nothing of the kind," I cried with great vigor, and the next minute was out of the 'nigger den.'

Taking the experience met with in this store as an example of what the other would be, I did not venture into it, and concluded to postpone my further efforts to obtain employment until the next day.

This decided, I went round to the custom house and got my trunk passed; and the officer making the examination inquired what had brought me to the island. After hearing my story, he advised me to go and see the Secretary of the Colony, "For," says he, "you will never be able to procure a position in this place worth having."

I thanked him for his advice, and promised to act upon it, and there and then inquired where the Secretary could be found. He very kindly offered to show me the way, and locking the door of his office, we at once set out.

We shortly found ourselves in Trafalgar square; and when I saw Nelson's monument it brought recollections of "the Trafalgar square" to my mind; and, oh! how thankful would I have been if I could have closed my eyes and

opened them to see the grand old column, guarded by its noble lions, here in our own London. After pointing out the door leading to the secretary's office, my friend—I call him *friend*, and before I wished him good-bye, I had some cause to regard him as one—left me, telling me to be sure and let him know how I got on. In I walked and asked to see the secretary; and for my pains received what I supposed was intended to be a withering look of contempt from a milk and water-looking sop, who insolently asked me what on earth I wanted with the "secwetaway?" Somewhat nettled by such treatment, and finding nothing in my appearance to warrant it, I replied that my business with him was of a private nature, and if he would have the kindness to show me to him, I should feel obliged.

"Doubtless your business is of a 'private chawactaw,'" drawled the insipid idiot, "but so many have annoyed the 'secwetaway' of late with business of a 'pwivate' nature, that he has given me 'instwuctions' to keep him from disturbance until I am sure."

I felt as though I would like to pay a fine of ten dollars, and wipe up the office floor with the carcass of this simpering monkey; but even as I meditated this, I happened to put my hand into my pocket, and the touch of the "little all" I possessed, compelled me to content myself by mentally cursing the infernal idiot.

These are the sort of fellows that bring down ridicule on the Englishman all over the civilized world; for go where you will, you will be sure to meet with some of this class. I have seen them in America, Australia, India, Africa and many other places. They get an idea into their addled

pates, that if they should articulate the English language as they find the masses speaking it, they would at once be set down as an American, Canadian, Australian, or native of whatever country they happen to be in. Such "snobs" as these are not in my opinion "Englishmen," but "ENGLISH THINGS," and the sooner they attain their senses and speak naturally, instead of drawling out what they have to say, and show as much respect for the letter R, as they do for the letter W, the better for themselves and their fellow-countrymen. Beggars can't be choosers, however, so swallowing my wrath and indignation, I told him how I had been induced to visit Barbados; also of my almost penniless condition, and wound up by informing him that I had been advised to see the secretary, who, perhaps, could do something for me.

When I finished speaking, the little fool stuck a pane of glass in his eye, and drawled out: "Oh, I could not think of 'cauwaying' such a tale as that to the 'secwetaway,' it is 'pewfectly widiculous,' besides," he added, with an impudent stare through his miniature window, "I don't think you are an Englishman; you don't look like one or speak like one."

Smarting with rage under this deliberate insult, I could keep my mouth shut no longer. "Well," I cried hotly, "if every man, in order to be an Englishman, has to look and speak as you do, I should feel sorry for the race; but fortunately they *do not*."

"Be 'vewy' careful what you say, sir; we don't allow any insolence here; 'wemember' this is a government building and I am employed by the 'Bwitish' government, and ——"

But I did not wait to hear what else the little "jack-

anapes" had to say, but catching sight of a door on the other side of the room, advanced toward it and, turning the handle, was about to enter, when I heard a loud voice commanding me to stop. Turning round I saw a gentleman who had just entered the office, with his hat still on. The "monkey" immediately left the chair he had been "half filling" and perched himself upon a stool, where he belonged. "What is your business here," inquired the new arrival, and as he spoke he seated himself in the chair just vacated by the "idiot."

Once more I went over the whole story of having been engaged two month's before by Mr. Cambourne, and had only just that morning learned of his arrest; and being unable to find any employment in the other stores, I deemed it useless to stay on the island any longer, and had, therefore, called to see if I could obtain any help from this office by which I could return either to England or the United States.

"I am afraid we can do nothing for you," replied the assistant. "You see this is not a crown colony, and the secretary is not authorized to act in cases of this kind. But, perhaps I can assist you to procure a cheap passage to England. How much money have you?"

I replied that ten dollars would cover all I had in the world, excepting the notes given to me by Mr. Cambourne, which, of course ——"

But 'ere I could finish speaking the assistant had jumped out of his chair, and greatly excited, cried:

"What! have you got any notes given to you by him?"

"Yes, I have five of them for £5 a piece, but I guess they are of no use now."

"Let me see them. Quick! let me see them," exclaimed the aroused assistant, and the "ape" perched on the stool turned partly around to take stock of the proceedings. Never dreaming anything would happen to me through having the notes in my possession, without any hesitation, I pulled them from my pocket and handed them over.

Looking carefully at them a minute or two, he sat down, and turning to me said: "Your story may be true, I think it is; but the very fact of these notes—which are all forged—having been found upon your person, make it my duty to place you under arrest."

The "monkey" turned around again with a sickly grin on his insipid features.

"What!" I cried, somewhat startled, "place me under arrest? What for? Have I not told you how these notes came into my possession? What more do you want?"

"I am very sorry," replied the clerk, "but your story will have to be proved. For my own part I do not think you are an accomplice of Cambourne's, but of course what I think is of no consequence, it remains for the governor to decide the matter, and, as I have already stated, it is my duty to give you into custody."

Without another word, he took a sheet of paper, and hastily writing a few words upon it, placed it in an envelope, then calling the "idiot off the perch," dispatched him with it.

In a few minutes the eschewer of R's returned, accompanied by a colored policeman in a white suit of duck, and before I could gather my senses or rightly understand what was going on, I found myself in a stone guard-room, and a

native soldier keeping watch over me with a rifle and fixed bayonet.

This was about three o'clock, and in about half an hour the Secretary's assistant, who had given me into custody, entered my cell and asked me if I had any letters or papers by which I could prove that I was an Englishman.

"Yes, I had several letters from my friends in England, and I also had one from Mr. Cambourne, written to me by him previous to his departure from the United States."

"Where are these letters?"

"In my trunk."

"Where is your trunk?"

"In the custom-house."

"Then I will have it brought here, Mr. Officer go to the custom-house with this gentleman and bring his trunk into the guard-room."

As the custom-house was only a few doors below, in a very short time I was searching for the correspondence which was needed to obtain my release. Having found it, I handed it to the official, and he selected Mr. Cambourne's letter, then taking two or three of the envelopes from my English mail, informed me that he thought they would be sufficient to prove my identity, also to assure the governor that I had come with the forged notes entirely ignorant of their fraudulent charcter. And so it proved, for in less than an hour's time, he returned to the guard-room bearing a letter from Sir ——, giving instructions for my instant release, and the next moment I was free once more, and deucedly glad I was of it.

As soon after my release as possible, I found a lodging

house, commensurate to my financial condition, and had my trunk taken there, then I changed my good clothes for the oldest and roughest togs I could find, fortunately a Cardigan jacket formed part of my wardrobe, and as I intended to look for a vessel, I instantly seized upon this as an exceedingly nautical garment. When I got down to the docks I thought my chance of speedy success appeared to be quite bright. It was in the very height of the sugar season, and the harbor was crowded with ships of every description, whilst the wharf literally swarmed with captains and other seamen.

Catching sight of an English captain, it did not take me long to tell him of the trouble I was in, and ask him if he could give me a berth in his cabin or gally, for of course it would have been useless for me to have tried to ship as an ordinary seaman, on an English vessel without being able to show any discharges.

He was very sorry, and so were a dozen more I related my tale of woe to, but none of them could take me back. Sick, tired and disheartened by my unsuccessful efforts I went to my room and tried to sleep, but I might just as well have tried to keep the earth from revolving; for what with my thoughts, the infernal heat, and the voracious mosquitoes, I found myself still awake when the old colored woman—without even the ceremony of knocking—walked into my room next morning bearing my coffee and toast.

Consuming this, I got up and dressed, then sticking the blackest pipe my collection contained between my lips, and rolling up my sleeves in order to show some tattoo marks on my arms—put there by an old seaman who had sailed with my father some years ago—proceeded to the docks and

began my second day of looking for a captain, fool enough to take me off the confounded island. Well, to make a long story short, the day passed away and I was just as far from finding one as when I began, and the next week brought me no better success, and an almost empty purse. I don't know what the deuce I would have done if it had not been for the old custom-house officer I have alluded to as my friend, who, noticing my altered appearance and my frequent visits to the docks, one day asked me how I was getting on?

"I ain't getting on at all," I replied, and told him of all that had befallen me since I had come to the island.

After listening attentively to my story, the old gentleman looked somewhat grave, and stroked his white beard, evidently deep in thought.

"So some of them won't believe you are an Englishman, eh! Well, now I hope you won't feel hurt at what I am going to suggest; but ——"

I hastened to assure him that nothing he could say would hurt my feelings, if it would point out the means by which I could leave the confounded hole I was then in.

"Well, now I'll tell you what I was thinking of; if they think you are more like an American than an Englishman, why not become one for the time being?

"What good would that do me?"

"Why, the American Vice-Consul here will interest himself in your behalf, and when he learns of you destitute condition, will procure you a berth on an American vessel in less than no time."

This had never occurred to my mind before, and discarding all conscientious scruples, I decided to act upon his advice that very instant.

"Where can he be found?"

"Right in there," he replied, pointing to a small building; and sure enough there was the American flag flying from the windows. Never before had the stars and stripes appeared so beautiful or interesting to me as on this morning; and shaking my friends hand, I hastened off to play the part of an "American citizen."

I found the Vice-Consul sitting in his chair, his feet resting on the railing which divided the room in the centre. The difference in the way I was welcomed here, from the manner in which I had been received by my own countrymen, struck me with great force; for no sooner did I introduce myself, than the feet came down and the hand of friendship and welcome was extended to me.

When I had told my story to him and stated the object of my visit, he said: "You are just in time. One of T——'s barks sails this noon, and Captain L—— is at this moment in the next room, I'll call him and introduce you."

After Captain had sized me up a bit, he promised to give me a berth, and told me "to be off and get my traps on board at once, for I don't intend to wait, and don't you forget it."

Wishing the Vice-Consul good bye, and again shaking him warmly by the hand, I rushed off to get my things aboard the "Atlantic."

By eleven o'clock this was accomplished, and finding I still had an hour left, I looked up my friend, the old custom house officer, and told him of my success.

To see the look of unadulterated and honest joy come into his kindly blue eyes, did me good; and when shortly after I left the island, this old friend and the American Vice-Consul were the only two persons on it I felt sorry to part from.

Of the hardships I endured on the voyage back to Brooklyn it is needless for me to speak; suffice it to say that we first put in to Antigua to discharge a deck-load of mules—which, by the way had been my especial charge from Barbados, and a lively time I had of it keeping them upon their feet—At Antigua we were to complete our cargo of sugar and molasses, and after a month of hauling hand over hand in the company of negroes, and under the almost tropical sun; we finally set sail for Brooklyn, which we reached in about another month.

I had shipped aboard the Atlantic as an ordinary seaman and I did the work of one; but although I had signed the ship's articles, never a cent did I get for it; but I suppose Captain L—— attended to that part of the business, and there is no doubt in the world, but what he found himself $50 ahead at the end of the voyage. But whether he did or not I don't care; all I wanted was to get back to New York, and succeeding in this I was satisfied. How I got from Brooklyn to Chicago, a distance of nearly a thousand miles, without money, I will relate to you some other time. And now gentlemen, you have heard how it was, I once temporarily became an "American."

When Mr. Pole concluded, and the usual applause had been accorded him, we found that only a few minutes remained for us to get back to our several houses, and accordingly the chairman announced the meeting at an end and we dispersed.

Some Employers Rob Their Salespeople, Who in Turn Get Even on the Customers.

The next time I visited the room at the "Crown," the meeting had not yet been called to order, and those in attendance were sitting in small groups telling short stories and recounting the day's happenings. In the midst of one of these groups I saw the chairman in earnest conversation, and drawing up a chair I sat down to find out the nature of the discussion. As I seated myself, Mr. Lane was saying: "I tell you Wood, you are wrong; it is true, I admit, that much undesirable stuff is by this means got rid of; but when you say the trade could not be successfully carried on without P. M's., I most emphatically repeat that you are mistaken."

"I quite agree with you Mr. Lane, observed another of the group, and further than that I would add, the system is the cause of more lying in the trade than would exist if it were abolished. I remember an incident ——"

"Never mind relating it just now," interrupted Mr. Lane, "I think this matter a very important one, and if you will wait a moment I will call the meeting to order, and you can then relate the incident to the whole audience at once.

Mr. Lane then rose and walking to his usual seat, knocked for order, and running his eye over the assembly in his usual manner, called upon Mr. Longman to do his duty. Without any hesitation that gentleman began:

In this rapid age of ours it is quite possible for a fashionable woman by wearing a certain style of dress or a particular shade of color, purchased only a week or two before, to find that what she had then supposed to be the "rage" was already dead, and soon would be interred. The natural result is, merchants catering to this class of trade, frequently find themselves overstocked with some lines of goods. On discovering this, the question arises to them: how shall we get rid of these goods? The only solution to the problem offering itself is: they must make it worth while to their assistants to push any bad property they may find in their respective departments. At present I know of but one way by which the desired result is obtained, and that is by resorting to the P. M. system.

* * * * * *

If the reader has ever been in the business, he or she will, of course, know what this system is. But to those who have never been unfortunate enough to find themselves behind the counter, a few words by way of explanation will be necessary. Suppose, for instance, a certain shade of blue to be the prevailing color in fashionable circles. Suddenly some prominent leader of society discovers such a shade refuses to harmonize with her complexion, or clashes with her furniture, or some other nonsense; and shortly after making this direful discovery, she startles the lesser lights having their orbits around and about her, by bursting in upon them arrayed in purple or crimson, or some other becoming color. What happens then? Why blue is at once voted "passé," and henceforth rigidly avoided. The merchant soon learns of the change, and hails it either with delight or with a curse, ac-

cording to the amount of the boycotted color he has in his shelves. If the quantity has startled him into profanity, the goods are all collected and he at once proceeds to P. M. them. This is done by placing upon the ticket, what would appear to the uninitiated as so much "Chinese;" but the salesman interprets it to mean this:—For every yard of this material I sell I will receive a penny, two-pence, three-pence, or some larger amount; depending on the price of the goods and the difficulty likely to be experienced in selling them. All money derived from this source, is called by the assistants, "P. M's," "Spiffs," "Bullseyes," "Tingies," etc., and a smart man in a liberal house, can often make as much in P. M.'s as his salary.

* * * * *

You all know what that is. When I first went behind the counter, I was placed in care of a man by the name of Camphill. His first name was Thomas; and for the sake of brevity we called him T. C.

It was this man's duty to give me my first lessons in the art of selling goods; and in justice to him I will say, it was possible for me to have had a worse tutor. T. C. knew his business thoroughly, and was therefore a first-class liar; in addition to ranking as the champion "spiff" maker of the house.

No matter what a customer asked for; if the article was not P. M.'d, he made it his business to sell her something that was. I could relate many yarns that I have heard this fellow tell in his endeavor to ram stuff they did not require down the throats of the public, in order to make a shilling or two in "tingies." But the one I have selected

will answer just as well as a dozen, as an illustration of T. C.'s ingenuity in this respect.

About the time of which I am speaking 187—, many of you will remember the great craze there was for grey China silks. So great was the rage for them, that not a house in all London could procure a supply sufficient to satisfy the demand. One morning we found ourselves without a yard of the coveted material in the house, and being unable to get any more, the result was, many sales were lost. In vain did we try to sell Japanese instead, and I believe we could have done so, had it not been for the great difference in their width, for not one woman in a hundred can distinguish one from the other by its appearance alone.

T. C. had so far escaped, but on the third day, this very smooth young man had a call for "grey China silk." After looking for his customer a moment, he asked in well feigned surprise, "why, haven't you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"Why about China."

"No, I haven't heard anything," replied the woman in confusion—caused by having to admit her ignorance—"what is it?"

"My dear madam, you certainly ought to read the papers and keep informed upon the topics of the day, if you did this, you would know that thousands of Chinese have been dying every day, for the last two months or more, from that terrible disease 'yellow fever.'

"Oh! yes, now I come to think of it, I did read something of the kind," quoth the woman—as a matter of fact, she did not, for it was nothing but a fabrication of lies constructed

by the ingenious and bold T. C. expressly for the occasion—"but what has that to do with the silks?"

"What has it got to do with the silks?" repeated T. C. "Why, it's got everything to do with them. The British government has established a quarantine against all vessels coming from Chinese ports, consequently no goods from that country have been delivered in England for over a month; and as a result there is not a yard of China silk in London." But, continued T. C., in his most seductive tones, "we have plenty of Japanese silks, and not one in a thousand can tell the difference; and in all probability, the very ones you have been looking at are Japanese instead of Chinese. Look at this and tell me if it is anything like what you want." And as he spoke T. C. placed before his customer a piece of silk which had been in the stock at least six or seven years, and had a P. M. of sixpence a yard on it. After inspecting it a short while the woman was bound to admit the article before her certainly was the same as she had always known as Chinese silk; and T. C. knew he had made a sale and a good P. M. Twenty yards, with sixpence a yard on it, netted him exactly ten shillings; a very snug sum in itself, to say nothing of what he rolled up the same day in a more ordinary manner.

When Mr. Longman finished speaking, a young man observed: "That the woman must have been a fool to believe such rot as that, for if she had only thought for one moment, she might have known that T. C. was stuffing her."

"I quite agree with you Mr. Jones," replied Longman, "and no doubt the very fact of her being a fool was the reason T. C. did stuff her. He saw at a glance the kind of

customer he had to deal with; and knowing his business thoroughly, as I have said before, he knew just how far he could go with her, and exactly the kind of yarn to tell her in order to bring about the desired result; and every man that has been in the trade a few years, ought to be able to do the same, for if he cannot, let me tell him right here, the best thing he can do is to step down and out, for he will never in this world make a success as a draper's assistant. Does anyone here suppose for an instant that this man, expert as he was in the trade, would have told the same tale to whoever happened to ask him for 'Grey China silks?' Not a bit of it! What would go down with one woman and prove a success as it did in this case, would, if told to another, bring hopeless ruin and disaster upon the salesman's plans."

Mr. Lane here rose and said: "Gentlemen, you have all heard Mr. Longman say he knows of but one method, by which old and undesirable goods are got rid of, and after thinking the matter over, I have come to the conclusion that such a system as the P. M. one is, should at once be abandoned. Why? In the first place, no one can possibly fail to observe the strong temptation to lie, that is thus thrown out to the lad just entering upon his commercial career, and in nine cases out of ten, I will venture to say the temptation is yielded to, and the boy soon becomes an unblushing and professional liar. Secondly, if such a system is persisted in, what customer can enter a shop feeling sure she will obtain the article she desires and asks for? Why, I have known cases —and so have all in this room—where ladies have called for goods of a certain make, and have been deliberately told by

the assistant, that they were just out; but here is something —with a "tingie" on—to take the place of it; and if the customer happens to be tired, or not over particular, or in a hurry, she often buys what she really does not need, and the salesman makes his 'P. M.' and tips the wink to the next man, who would have done the same thing himself, if the opportunity had been given him. But if it is discovered that the woman is of the class that will buy nothing whatever, except what she asks for; a piece of the desired goods is at last found—raked up quite by accident of course—the salesman is profuse in his apologies for not having found it before, and the customer procures the quantity required, and departs without suspecting for a moment, the man had endeavored to sell her something she did not want, because it had a 'spiff' on it.

"Now if this system is discarded, as I have already said it should be, what is to take the place of it? Why, simply this; if a merchant buys his goods recklessly, let him suffer for it; and when he finds his shelves crowded with goods that have depreciated in value, let him reduce the price to what they are honestly worth. Why should he make his customers pay for his folly and bad judgment? Let him also keep good men in his employ; men who will take an interest in his business. Pay them fair wages and give them to understand that their situations depend upon the stocks they have charge of being well kept and free from old stock. If such a thing is done, it will give those men possessing greatest ability, a chance to come to the front; but as it is now, a man of very ordinary attainments, often gets a larger salary than one with twice the skill; simply

because he has been *working for the firm the longest.*" As Mr. Lane concluded his remarks, Mr. Buggins wanted to know how the employés were going to deduct the FINES if P. M.'s were abolished?

Mr. Johnson rose and took it upon himself to answer this question by saying: "this system of FINING, is, in my opinion, one of the meanest forms of robbery in existence. In some houses a man can hardly turn round without rendering himself liable to a fine of some amount. Look at Lappet & Tambours for instance; as you all know they have a hundred and thirty rules with a fine attached to each one of them, and unable to evolve any more from their tyrannical brains, they wind up by adding this one: 'For any misdemeanor not mentioned in these rules; fine, six pence.' If this is not daylight robbery, will someone tell me what is? Now there are many houses in London employing all the way from a hundred to five hundred assistants, to say nothing of those running into the thousands. Supposing the average amount of fines per head is —well to put it low—say eighteen pence a month, it is plain to see that any firm employing five hundred hands will make a good thing out of it. They can talk as they like about the library eating it up; but do we not pay a subscription fee of a shilling a month for the support of this institution? Certainly we do; and there is not a house in London with a library attached to it, but what the assistants employed therein are assessed some amount. Now let us see how much per month is deemed necessary by some of the firms employing five hundred assistants. In the first place, five hundred shillings amount to twenty-five pounds; add to

this the sum derived from fines, which, at the rate I have mentioned, is thirty-seven pounds ten shillings, and we have a grand total of sixty-two pounds ten shillings per month. Now anyone with a grain of common sense knows that any library, such as those usually found in one of these houses, does not require this enormous sum to run it; and I have no hesitancy in declaring that at least fifty pounds of what is supposed to be '*sunk*' in literature for the employés, is in reality '*sunk*' *in the capacious vockets of the firm.*"

The "American" rose next and gave it as his opinion that the systems of P. M's and fines should both be abolished; and those firms keeping a library in connection with their establishments, should also reduce the subscription; the very idea of such enormous sums being invested in such an institution was, as Mr. Johnson had just intimated, *perfectly preposterous*; and, further than this, I also think that even the sum allowed by Mr. Johnson to defray expenses is too great.

Suppose, for instance, you have in your employ a hundred hands all told; of this number--if you be in favor of female assistants—sixty will be girls, and I may add that when I use the term "girls," I intend it to apply to anything found behind our counters *wearing petticoats*, without regard to age—thirty will be men, and the remaining ten apprentices. Now, no young man finding such great sums of money rolling into his pockets at the end of every month, together with possessing such an utter contempt for it, would begrudge the paltry sum of a shilling a month for the enjoyment of such an inestimable boon as the average library found in the trade.

Thirty shillings make one pound ten. Now tax the girls half the amount of that paid by the men, and this produces another thirty shillings making, a total of three pound. The apprentices, of course, could hardly be expected to come in on the deal, as they get nothing for their three or four years services, except as their indentures put it: *fit and wholesome food*, and *fit and proper shelter*. Now you have about two shillings and fourpence for each working day to expend upon your library; and if this amount will not procure all the reading matter likely to interest and instruct your hundred employés, then they are the hardest hundred drapers to please I have ever heard of. If you wish to add any new book, or have old ones rebound, surely the sum accruing from the sale of old papers and periodicals, will be more than sufficient to cover the expense.

The "American" here paused a moment to take a sip at his drink, and continuing said:

Before closing my remarks upon this subject, I would like to add that I can give the names of many large houses in the United States, as well as in London, who for years had been staunch defenders of the P. M. and fine system, but who are now conducting their business on new principles, with most satisfactory results. Indeed, I fail to see how it could be otherwise, for does it not strike you that with all other conditions being as favorable as they were previous to the new departure, such a method would be greatly calculated to *clean out*, and eventually KEEP OUT all those assistants who are culpably negligent, leaving only those capable and trustworthy. And what greater helps to success can any business man have than these?

One of the Most Unvarnished Yarns in the Trade.

"Mr. Cunnington, I don't think you have been given a chance to distinguish yourself yet; suppose you grasp this opportunity to do so."

These words were spoken one evening by Mr. Lane; and the young man mentioned, refilled his pipe, cleared his throat and proceeded to contribute his yarn.

"Some years ago, I was living in an east-end house, having for its twenty-ninth rule, this:— Any assistant taking three consecutive 'swaps' will be liable to immediate discharge."

"Now to some of you fellows, who have never worked in a house of this kind, such a rule will appear at once novel and tyranical. But if you want to gather any idea of the class of men it constructs, you will have to work in one of these houses a few months, as I have done. You talk about the liars and schemers you meet in the trade of this part of London, but they would sink into insignificance if compared with some of those in one of the East-end houses. Just try to imagine a man who has lost two sales, and the very next customer he gets asks for something he knows is not in the house. Imagine further, if you can, the feelings of this man, when putting his hand into his pocket, finds nothing there except the material out of which it is fashioned; add to all this, the fact that if he lets this customer escape him, he will be turned out of house and home, without a mo-

ment's warning; possessing, perhaps, only what will keep him in the poorest manner for a week or two. Is it any wonder, that under these circumstances, a man does not hesitate to put into execution, schemes evolved from a mind driven to dispair by such facts staring him in the very face?

Just apply the circumstances to yourselves, and think what you would do if standing in his shoes.

Here you are with an alternative; you can either tell the truth and see yourself and the customer leave the house or you can work some scheme and retain your position.

Which will you do? Remember you have not a shilling in your pocket and probably only a very small sum coming to you for services up to date. Now, which will you do? Will you tell the truth and run the chance of going hungry for an indefinite period or will you diverge from the path of strict veracity and continue your services in a place where to say the least of it you will obtain enough food to keep body and soul together and sufficient shelter to sleep under?

Which will you do?

I'll answer the question, and as my experience among drapers' assistants is somewhat extensive, I venture to say, it will apply to ninety-five per cent of the men in the trade to-day. My answer is: You will 'NOT' run any chance of suffering the pangs of hunger; but execute any plan or scheme by which you see a possible chance of avoiding it. Now for my tale. The proprietor of the house I have referred to had a habit of standing in the doorway of his establishment, and every customer leaving the shop would be stopped by him and asked if she had procured the articles she required? If she answered him in the affirmative, all

well and good; but should she say no, then woe unto the unlucky wretch who had waited on her.

One morning the boss was in his usual position; and one of the fellows at least wished he was not. For sitting on a chair before him was an old lady, to whom he had been vainly trying to sell a dress. Every few minutes she would get up and say: "I see you haven't what I want, so I had better go." Just as often as she did so, poor old James would contrive to get her to resume her seat; making some excuse for her doing so. "He had forgotten to show her this, or that, or he thought a new lot had come in, amongst which was just the thing she wanted; if she would kindly excuse him, he would go find out."

As he told her this he moved off in the direction of the warehouse, and as soon as he was out of his customer's sight, beckoned me towards him and said: "Look here, Cunnington, if I miss this sale I'll lose my job, and I am dead broke. Now, there is just one chance for me to avoid this, and that is to get this old 'tab' out of the house without the boss striking her. Now to do this I want you to go down and tell the old man that a gentleman in another part of the building wishes to see him, and when he moves I'll shunt the old girl out. Do you catch on?"

I told him I grasped the idea, and immediately set off to execute it.

"A gentleman wishes to see you in number fifty-six, sir."

"What kind of a gentleman?" snorted the old man.

This question completely knocked me out; we had never bargained for it, and I got all mixed up and blurted out the first thing coming into my mind.

"He is a commercial traveler, I think sir."

"Oh! he is, is he? Well you go and tell him that I have something else to do, besides run about after travelers;" and he resumed his position.

Whilst I had been talking to the boss, I saw old James still endeavoring to hold his customer, who was again upon her feet, and from the position in which she was standing with her face toward the door, I knew that all his efforts to again persuade her to sit down would be useless. Seeing that the old man did not move, James fearing the worst, had grown quite alarmed; and when I got back to the counter he remarked: "sotto voce" "well its no go; eh?" I shook my head in reply, and was about to tell him of the mess I had made of the whole affair; but before I could begin, he jumped over the counter, and looking the woman square in the left optic, proceeded to scare the wits out of her.

"Madam," he said, "you no doubt think it strange of me to keep you here so long, but you will pardon me when you hear why I have done so. You see that gentleman standing down by the door?"

"Yes she saw him."

"Well my dear madam, he is a LUNATIC, A RAVING MADMAN; oh my! but he is crazy; fancies every woman he sets eyes on is his wife come back to life again. There! look at him now, he is trying to stop that lady as she goes out."

The old lady looked as directed, and saw the old man doing just what he had been engaged in for years.

"Well, why don't the proprietor have him looked after?" cried the old lady, evincing the first signs of alarm.

"Oh, bless you, he does; why he is his own brother, and

a keeper is always supposed to be in attendance upon him; but from some cause or other, he is not here this morning, neither is the proprietor. And the poor fellow finding himself at liberty, has strolled into the shop, and taken up the position he used to occupy in his sane days, before his wife died."

"Poor fellow;" simpered the old lady, her tone of alarm changed for one of sympathy; "but is he at all dangerous?"

"Dangerous! I should rather think he was dangerous; that's the trouble. Why I remember on one occasion, he caught hold of a lady—who I suppose bore an unusually strong resemblance to his departed wife—and it took five of us besides his keeper to rescue her from him."

"Well, ain't there any other way by which I can leave the shop?" nervously gasped the old woman; by this time greatly frightened—perhaps she was wondering to herself if *she* bore an unusually strong resemblance to his departed spouse.

"No madam, through that doorway is the only way by which you can get out; but I will walk down the floor with you and if he attempts to say a word to you, run for your life and I'll do the best I can to hold him back. Mr. Cunnington I wish you would be kind enough to assist me." I of course assented, and not without some misgivings for the success of James' audacious scheme, followed them down the shop.

When within about three or four yards from the door, James gave me the wink, and motioned me to jump behind the counter on one side, and as I did so he slipped noiselessly behind one on the other side.

This manœuvre on our part of course left the old woman alone, who, as soon as she missed us, turned round to see where we were, but of course did not discover. At the same instant, the old man conscious of her approach, turned round and with his usual broad grin exclaimed: "have——" Whatever else he would have said, the old lady did not wait to hear; but with a piercing yell of fright and a wild lunge with her umbrella at the boss she darted swiftly down the street and I shouldn't wonder if the terrified female is running yet.

The boss stood in the doorway staring wonderingly at her retreating figure, and not until she turned a corner and vanished from his view did he re-enter the shop. When he did so of course James and I were back in our accustomed places as though nothing had happened.

"Who waited on that woman that just went out?" roared the old man, almost frantic with rage. "Did you Smith?" "Jones, you, eh!" "No." "You didn't?" "Who did then, eh?" "You, Cook?" "White did you wait on her?" "No sir, I think Mr. James did." "James, James," bawled the frantic boss, "what in the devil is the matter with that woman you just waited on?"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir, but I think she must be crazy by her actions."

"What did she buy?"

"Nothing, sir. She came to the counter and asked me to show her those TWEEDLE, BOMBASTIC, SHIVEROTTIE TWIST CLOTHS we advertised at a penny a yard."

Here I fell down behind the counter and endeavored to swallow a three yard remnant of cashmere in my efforts to

keep from laughing; but James, on the contrary, only went on pulling his mustache with a most blank and innocent look on his countenance.

"What the deuce did she mean?" demanded the "guv."

That is exactly the question I asked her; and she said I ought to know, she didn't, it wasn't her business. Finally I discovered she meant Scotch tweeds, and showed her all these; but when I told her they were one and eleven pence three farthings a yard, she jumped clean off her chair and flew out of the shop. I really do think the poor woman is a little off.

By this time the old man had cooled off, and it was with no small degree of thankfulness I heard him break into a loud laugh at James' "cod," thereby indicating to me that it was all over and I could stand up in safety. Amen.

Another.

As Mr. Cunnington concluded, the audience showered the usual applause upon him, and after the glasses and pipes of many had been replenished and something like quietness again restored, Mr. Lane called upon Mr. Nelson to do what he could in the line of "yarning." This gentleman, who by the way had the reputation of being one of the boldest men in the London trade, at once announced his intention to relate an incident, the victim of which can be seen if you look this way. We all looked, and he opened out.

Gentlemen, what I am about to relate transpired in a

house of the same class as the one referred to by Mr. Cunnington, and was also caused by the existence of such a rule; viz: Any assistant losing three sales in succession will be at once discharged. It was once my luck to lose a berth through this rule and it happened in this way.

One morning I had already taken two "swaps," when an old girl sat down in front of me and began to unroll a paper parcel; saying as she did so, that it contained a piece of print she wished to match. As soon as it was disclosed to my view, I knew we had nothing like it, and already began to wonder where I would procure my next job. The manager knowing I had missed the two previous sales, was walking up and down the floor, with his eye steadily fixed upon me, waiting to pounce down upon me as a hawk does upon a sparrow, if I should get another "six-quarter."

I pulled down piece after piece of print, thinking thereby, to hold the old lady long enough for the manager to turn his back a few moments, and thus given an opportunity, I could slide her out of the shop in safety. But no such luck was in store for me, and to complete my discomfiture, the old hag got off her chair and told me to tie up her sample. Seeing no possible way out of the difficulty and becoming reconciled to my fate, I lifted her sample for the first time, and the weight told me at once that it contained quite a number of yards. A sudden inspiration struck me, and without a moments hesitation—for when you do anything like I was about to attempt, you must do it boldly—I enquired what length she wanted?

"Just two yards," she replied; "you see I have enough for the skirt and want a little more for a waist."

"Well that is very lucky, for now I come to think of it, I believe we have a remnant containing just that quantity, and if you will sit down a minute I'll have a look for it."

Of course the old woman was delighted to think she could obtain it without looking further, and she accordingly dropped into her chair again. I now made believe to institute a search under the counter, where the remnants were kept. But I did no such thing, for I knew exactly what the result would have been; we did'nt have the print and had never had it in the house. Now instead of looking for the supposed remnant, I was in reality *making one*; and this is how I did it:

Taking the customer's own piece of print, I spread it out underneath the counter, and whipping out my scissors. in an instant had cut off the quantity required, then taking this piece I shoved it in amongst a bundle of bona fide remnants, and pretending to have just found them, lifted them upon the counter, and began to search for the desired pattern.

"Have you found it?" presently inquired the old lady.

"Not yet, but I think we have a small piece somewhere," and on I went removing piece after piece, until at length nearly at the bottom of the pile, I came to the one wished for. With an exclamation of well feigned delight at my success, I brought it out and measured it.

"How much did you say you wanted?"

"Just two yards," replied the woman.

"Well I never, how very fortunate; why that is just exactly the length in this piece!"

"Let me see it," says she.

I of course handed it to her with all the confidence in the.

world; and taking it she began to compare it with her somewhat reduced sample. First she twisted it this way, then that, now placing the small piece on top of the large, and the next moment reversing them. "It don't seem to be just exactly like mine after all, but perhaps I can't see well, my eyes are not very good, and you people keep the shops so dark."

You can take it to the door madam if you wish; I remarked with great assurance, knowing as I did that not a particle of difference existed. Having obtained this permission, the old girl trotted off to the door carrying the two pieces of print with her, closely followed by the argus of a manager.

As she was making her examination in the brighter light of the street, I stood leaning back against the fixtures, congratulating myself for having thought of the scheme, and was just about to tell the fellow next me what I had done, when the old wretch came back to the counter and again I approached her, at the same time taking out my check-book in the expectation of making a bill for the two yards of print.

But oh! how sadly I was mistaken in this idea; for no sooner had she returned, than the old fool threw down the print exclaiming: "Oh, no! IT IS NOT A BIT LIKE MINE in the daylight; it is a different figure altogether. Wrap up my piece and let me go, you have kept me here too long already."

This disgusted me, and careless with rage at the old crank's stubbornness and stupidity, I jerked the piece out of her hand and pitched it under the counter again.

How she got her package wrapped up I do not know, nor do I care; for before the manager could get the chance to give me the "bullet" I left the stock and rushed to the counting-house to draw my salary. Obtaining the "pieces," I went to my room to pack my trunk, with a view to getting out of the imfernal "crib" as quickly as possible. Another half hour saw this accomplished; I had also changed my "shoptogs" for my "cribbing" clothes; then giving one of the fellows—occupying the same bed-room as I had done—instructions to see to the delivery of my box. I began to shake hands all around the house previous to taking my final departure.

Just as I was wishing the last man good-bye, and telling him the cause of my leaving, who should I see come flying into the shop, but the old girl herself. I gave a chuckle to myself as I saw her go sailing past me, wildly waving the piece of print which had thrown me out of "collar," and it was the very fact of my being out of "collar," which rendered it possible for me to stand there and observe her with so much amusement.

"Where is that man who stole my print? where is he? where is he?" cried the angry female; "just let me get a hold on him; I'll teach him to rob a poor lone widow in this manner."

The manager, who was on the floor, as soon as he heard the uproar my last customer was causing hastened forward, and when he saw who it was making such a disturbance, instantly recognized her as the woman to whom I had failed to sell something *she did not want.*

"Take a seat, madam, and try to be calm."

"Calm, calm," reiterated the agitated female, "how can a poor, lone widow who has been so shamefully robbed be calm?"

"Robbed! robbed!" gasped the manager, in horror, "what do you mean?"

"Why, I mean just what I say, sir; I have been ROBBED," bawled the old girl; and raising her voice still higher—as though intent upon giving as much publicity to her wrongs as possible—she fairly shrieked: "And in this very shop was the place I got robbed."

Overcome, either by her feelings or exertions, the "lone widow," as she styled herself, allowed a tear to course itself down her wrinkled cheek; and sobbingly said: "Oh, the heartless wretch, to steal my print from me in such a manner."

"I wish you would endeavor to compose yourself, madam, and tell me in a more sensible manner what print you have been—eh, I mean you have lost," remarked the manager in soothing tones.

Thus appealed to the old lady with a great effort controlled her feelings sufficiently to inform him that she had that morning come into the shop with a piece of print containing seven yards, and asked a young man to match it for her, but instead of doing so, he had kept her piece and given her one with only five yards in it, and she was sure he had stole the other two yards; for," she added, I thought when I first set eyes on him he was a bad lot, and if I don't get it back I'll make it warm for the house; yes, I will."

Having heard the old woman relate the story of her wrongs, the manager of course, remembered the incident at once,

and was telling her of my departure; when I quietly slipped from my hiding place, and strolled leisurely down the floor. I knew what effect this would have upon the sorrowful dame; therefore was not surprised to see her start from her chair and wildly shriek, "there he is!" "there he is!" "that's the man!" "he stole my print!"

The next instant and she was upon me, and I began to wonder if I had acted wisely in disclosing my person to the enraged woman; for with a flourish of her arms—which were anything but white and delicately rounded—she made a lunge at my head, which I only avoided by ducking with great alacrity. Before she could follow up the attack, the manager, beside himself with rage, at the disgraceful proceedings, inquired of me as I turned my back, what the devil I meant by treating customers of the house in the way I had treated this lady.

Now, as I was out of their employ, I of course did not care the toss of a tinker's farthing, for the manager or a dozen like him; so when he had put this question to me in such an abrupt manner, I feigned much surprise, and with all the dignity I could assume, demanded to know what he meant by thus addressing a "private gentlemen?"

"A private gentleman," slowly repeated he, "what the devil do you mean sir, you're no 'private gentleman,' but a 'draper's assistant,' and I am manager and partner of this business, and can and will speak to you just as I wish."

"Oh! indeed, you think so do you, well if you will oblige me by adjourning to the back alley, I will do my best to convince you that even '*managers and partners*' are sometimes mistaken;" and with a look of profound contempt at

the thunderstruck manager, I turned on my heel and walked down the shop.

"Nelson! Nelson! come back, I want to speak to you."

"Are you calling me sir?"

"Yes, of course I am; your name's Nelson, ain't it?"

"It was a short while ago, but now it is *Mr.* Nelson, please remember sir, that I am not working for Smith and Loom now, and when you address me, you must do so in a proper manner."

"Well then, *Mr.* Nelson, if you will be so particular, what have you done with this customer's print?"

"Print?" I exclaimed in the most aggravating manner I knew how.

"Don't be a fool sir;" cried the manager, by this time thoroughly aroused and exasperated at my coolness and the tittering of the other fellows, who told me afterwards they never enjoyed anything so much before.

Mr. Flyabout, (that was the manager's name; I have been unable to recall it until now,) if you will persist in talking to me in such an insulting manner, I shall be under the painful necessity of punching your head. I want you to distinctly understand that I am a private gentleman, as I have before informed you—if I remember right, I had about thirty shillings in my pocket at the time, but that made no difference, I was not working for him then—and will not permit any one to call me a fool; so take care."

This was more than he could stand; and realizing that something would have to be done if he wished to keep control of the fellows so highly amused at his discomfiture, he said sternly: "look here young fellow, I will give you just one

more chance to tell me what you did with this customer's print, and if you refuse I shall send for Mr. Loom." This made me mad and I told him "he could send for the 'devil, if he wished; and if he came, the best thing he could do, would be to go home with him." Before the dazed and furious Mr. Flyabout could articulate another word, I was in the street. Whether or no the old hag ever got her two yards of print I do not know, but I hope she did not; for any woman who is so confoundedly obstinate as to say a piece of goods cut right off her own sample, is not at all like that sample, deserves to lose it. If a few more of the chronic shoppers parading about our shops and pulling things around which they have no right to touch, would lose something now and again, I for one would not shed a tear of pity for them.

That's all; and Mr. Nelson who had grown hot and excited whilst relating his yarn, vigorously fanned himself with his handkerchief.

Cranks and Shoppers---Lo! the Woods are Full of 'em.

Another month had come and gone, likewise another banquet, provided by our genial host, but unfortunately I had been unable to partake of it, having with several others in our house been sent to another part of London to assist at the semi-annual sale of a branch establishment. It was, therefore, with much pleasure we again visited our snug quarters at the "Crown," after so long an absence.

The night of our return we were given quite an ovation, for among our number were some of the most experienced and entertaining fellows.

The chairman, having brought the audience to order, called upon the "American"—who had been absent for so long—to give us a few more leaves from his interesting diary. That gentleman thereupon arose and lit his pipe, and again resuming his seat commenced:

Gentlemen, the last night it was my pleasure to enjoy the comforts of this room, if I remember correctly, it was Mr. Nelson who told the last yarn, and a highly interesting one it was. During the narration of it I was very much struck by his closing remarks, which contained, as nearly as I can recollect, anything but an expression of good wishes for a class of women known to the trade as "shoppers." The mention of the word "shoppers" always reminds me of the United States, which, I am convinced is the home of that irritating biped. Now it is generally understood in the dry-goods trade of America that a "shopper" is a woman entering a store for any other reason except the one she ought to. She may go in to be amused, she may go in to wait for a street car, she may go in to wait for the bank or the post-office to open, she may go in to avoid a shower of rain, she may go in to gossip, she may go in to sell tickets for an orphan's fair or a church sociable, she may go in to rent furnished rooms, she may go in to fix her hair in a style she has just seen another woman's arranged, indeed, she may go in to do a hundred and one things, but not one of these will she perform without looking at a whole pile of goods, any of which she has no more idea of purchasing than a nigger has of emigrating to Iceland.

Now the chief cause for this state of affairs is, to my way of thinking, due to the fact that a very large percentage of young married couples and small families do not, like our people here in England, keep house, but board in private houses or hotels. It is no unusual thing to find a dozen couples—each couple as a rule occupying one or two rooms —living in one house.

The consequence is, these women, having no household duties to attend to, hardly know how to pass the time intervening between breakfast and dinner. There they are; they get up and go down to breakfast, after which the husbands go to their business, and the first thing you know there are a dozen women sitting around the house having nothing to do but gossip, for the next three or four hours. The gossip and lunch over, they next divide themselves into couples, and each pair takes upon themselves the task of preparing the afternoon programme. This programme is usually drawn from about four things: It is either a walk, a ride on a street car, a call upon a friend, or to go down town to "shop around and get samples." Now, as the American women are not so fond of pedestrian exercise as their English cousins, a walk very rarely forms part of their programme. They complain that the cars do not run far enough for a nickel, and will, therefore, patronize them but seldom—as a means of spending their spare time. This leaves the question to be decided from one of two things: they must either call upon an acquaintance, or they must *take in the dry-goods stores*.

Knowing as I do of their fondness for both of these, I hesitate to say which they give the preference to; but certain

it is they do the latter far more frequently than the poor dry-goods clerks wish them to.

Now, what I have to say is chiefly on the subject of "shopping;" and I shall confine myself to remarks upon this alone; and as you are all men in the business where the greatest amount of "shopping" is done, I hope they will be interesting.

To commence with, as soon as one of these interesting couples have decided to pass the afternoon "shopping," the first question arising to them is:

"What do we want?"

"Well I don't want anything; do you?"

"Not a thing."

"Oh! try and think of something Mrs. Tirem."

"I can't, Mrs. Fussem; really I don't need a single thing."

"Well, let us think of something they are not likely to have."

And accordingly they put their heads together with this end in view. Now I have actually known women living in one of these large boarding-houses, cut a piece of cloth from an old dress and so change its color, that it would be impossible to match it from the largest stock in the country. The reason for doing this you will readily preceive, is to have first of all, an excuse for entering the store; and secondly, an excuse for not purchasing; for what can salesmen say, if they are unable to match a customer's sample? except "they are sorry."

Then another species of shopper with more "gall,"—to use a Yankee term—than the other women possessed; will come in, and after looking half an hour or so, at stuff

she had no idea of buying, tell the clerk point blank he has not a large enough variety for her to choose from; and quietly walk out. Another set of cranks inform you that they don't like to decide, without bringing the dressmaker, and will wait for her to see it. This excuse, makes a man think that the poor, soft creature, has not enough mind of her own, to determine what she can or shall wear; but this thought of his makes no difference to the "shopper," all she desires is to pass the time away, and having proved successful, she cares very little what the thoughts of the salesman are. Besides these excuses, which are by this time "STALE" TO EVERY MAN IN THE BUSINESS, I could enumerate at least a dozen of a similar character; but for the sake of brevity, I will refrain from doing so.

If a woman would invent some new and entirely original mode of "shopping," I would not care half so much; but when they spring the *old moss-covered racket upon you*, expecting to be believed, it is galling in the extreme. Occasionally, I have met with a woman making an excuse so widely different from the common run, that for the moment I have almost admired the creature for her ingenuity.

One of these I will relate to you; and notwithstanding its absurdity, I could not help admiring the woman's "monumental gall," if gall it was. But since it occurred, I have frequently thought that it was not an exhibition of nerve but merely a bad case of absent-mindedness. But of this I will leave you to be the judges. Here is the yarn.

Some years ago, while working in a western town of medium size, I was one morning called to wait upon a lady requiring gentlemen's underwear. Now I had only been in

the house a few weeks, and not knowing the woman to be a "chronic shopper," I started in to show her a full line of goods. But everything I pulled down she would take a feel of and remark "too thin," "too thin." "You see my husband has such a weak chest and I am afraid to buy him any of these for fear they should not be warm enough."

Back I went again to the shelves and brought forth some heavy lambs-wool shirts, which I should have thought would have been thick enough and warm enough for the most delicate, but the same old "too thin," "too thin," came from the customer; and in despair I essayed to make a last effort to find something that was *not* "too thin." As I stood there looking over the boxes for the size she wanted, my eye lit on one marked "ALL WOOL DOUBLE BREASTED SHIRTS." Eureka, I cried. I'll fix you now my lady, and out came the "double breasted shirts." At last madam, I think I have found the very article you require. You say your husband has a weak chest? and must have something "extra heavy." Now here is the exact thing a man suffering with a weak chest needs, "an all wool, double breasted shirt," recommended by the medical faculty as a preventative from coughs and colds.

"What? a double-breasted shirt, why I never heard of such a thing; let me see it; well to be sure, well I declare, ain't that nice, what next will they make I wonder. AND ARE THE DRAWERS DOUBLE-BREASTED TOO?"

Great Scott! gentlemen, when that woman put the question to me, my first impulse was to roar; but I did not; I just stood there, and looked her square in the eye to see if she were "guying" me. But if she was, devil a bit of a

sign did she make to that effect, but stood there without a bit of expression on her face, waiting for her answer.

"No, madam they are not," I replied; and still having a lingering doubt of her innocence, I thought I would be sure about it and get back at her; so I quietly added: they were going to make the drawers the same way, but the only man understanding the manufacturing of them suddenly died, and the secret was buried with him. Never a smile, but "then you haven't the drawers to match the shirts?" No madame, I am sorry, but I have not.

"Then I can't take them, for my husband would never think of wearing an odd suit of underwear," and without any further effort I let her go.

When she had gone I discovered that she was one of the worst "shoppers" in town; and you can bet your life, the next time she came into the store, I did not wait on her.

Mr. Pole paused a moment at the conclusion of his yarn to take a drink and relight his pipe, which he had allowed to go out. When the fire had been applied he continued: Now I am speaking of American "shoppers" I will relate another incident, which for abnormal capriciousness, beats anything I have ever met with or even heard of in connection with our trade. Like the previous narrative this also happened to myself; I can, therefore, vouch for its accuracy. A few years before I left America to return to England, I was working in one of the largest dry-goods stores in Chicago. Now if I am right in saying, the United States is the home of the "shopper," I can, with an equal chance of being correct, state that Chicago is the SCHOOL wherein they attain the highest degree of proficiency; and from this

school they will graduate at least a couple of years before those being trained in other cities.

If such a rule as the one mentioned by Mr. Nelson some weeks ago—I mean the one dismissing a salesman on the spot for taking three "swaps"—should be placed among those of some of the Chicago houses, the average length of service of the clerks employed therein would be about fifteen minutes. Why, gentlemen, you here in London have no idea of the number of women that will enter a Chicago store in the course of a day without ever dreaming of making a purchase. I have actually known two women walk into a store, and upon the floorwalker asking what they required, were bound to confess they did not know. Of course such instances are very rare, for their command of "nerve" usually stands them in good stead. But think of it, fellows, especially those of you who are constantly complaining of the tough customers met with in London; how would you like to wait on this kind of trade? However let me relate my yarn and then you will be better able to form some conception of the characters the dry-goods clerks of Chicago have to contend with.

It was the middle of winter, and I had been transferred from the department in which I had worked through the summer to the woolens. One morning I was called to wait on an "ancient and modern female," that is, what part of her was "natural" was "ancient," but anything additional was decidedly "modern." The fact of her being a maiden lady was self evident for the usual indications of a state of single-blessedness—or perhaps single-cussedness—were not wanting in the least particular.

Knowing the value of a little judicious flattery, I said "what do you wish to see Madam?" with the accent on the "madam." With a smile of great benignity, she replied:—as sweetly as her soured spinster-hood would allow—"some grey flannel, or something of that sort; anything will do if it is nice and warm, and all wool." I thought I had run across a soft snap; but we get fooled once in a while, and I soon found this to be one of the occasions.

"Oh no! that won't do at all, dear me no; nor that. I couldn't think of putting such rough stuff as that on the dear little thing. I want something softer and finer."

Out came something softer and finer—if I remember correctly it was grey English broad-cloth, at three dollars a yard. —"No, that won't do either; haven't you got something more like this?" and as she spoke, she selected a sample, from a dozen or more obtained elsewhere. This was a revelation to me, and I tumbled to her racket at once, and mentally resolved to refuse her a sample if she should ask for one.

When I returned with a piece of cloth as near like her sample as we had in the stock, the "*old chromo*" was busily engaged in turning her hand-satchel inside out.

Did any of you fellows ever get a chance to examine the contents of an American woman's hand bag? No, then you don't know what you have missed. No one would ever believe that the array of articles laid upon my counter, could ever have been taken from that little bit of a six by eight bag the old—*very old*—"girl" was still rummaging in. Already she had turned out two handkerchiefs, the front part of a wig, a powder puff, a comb, two sets of false and beautiful teeth, a small bottle of smelling salts—to use in case a

man looked at her—several old gloves, and the inevitable package of candy; which no doubt in a great measure accounted for the presence of the false teeth; these together with a batch of other feminine articles, the names of which I do not know, were scattered in confusion over the counter.

Supposing the "antique" creature had lost her purse, or some other valuable, I, being of a compassionate nature, offered to assist in the search.

"It is not my purse, but a sample I am looking for;" she informed me, "and it was the exact color I wanted to match; but I am afraid I have lost it. Dear! dear! what shall I do if I have? I can't come down town again before to-morrow, and that means 'Poor Clara' will have to go cold another day;" and the old lady showed signs of great distress; but a sudden thought striking her, her "decorated" face brightened, and she exclaimed: "Oh! perhaps I left it at Fields. I was in there a few moments ago, but they couldn't match it for me. You just leave these here a few minutes and I'll go down there and see if I can find it." Saying this, she began to gather up her rubbish and replace it in the satchel, and I walked away to wait on another customer.

I had only gone a few steps however before I heard the "old virgin" shriek out: "Young man, young man, come here please; I have found my sample, I pulled it out with some of my other things and let it fall on the floor; here it is."

Now what in the devil do you suppose this "old corkscrew-framed chromo" handed me for a sample? Can't imagine; no of course you can't imagine, neither could anyone else; so I'll tell you.

It was about half a dozen short grey hairs, not the sort of grey hairs that are brought with sorrow to the grave, oh, no; these had always been grey and always would be; for they were nothing more or less than a few hairs from the coat of a "dog," tied together with a piece of silk thread. This then was the poor little thing who could not possibly wear a coat made of cloth at three dollars a yard. This also must have been the young lady referred to as "Poor Clara," of whose comfort her tender and ancient guardian had been so solicitous. Ridiculous as the circumstance was, I never cracked a smile but received the sample with as much "sang froid" as I would have done, had I been engaged in matching cloth to dog's hairs all my life.

"Oh!" gasped the "ancient and modern," with a sigh of relief. "I am so glad I found it before I left the store, for I am quite sure I should have lost it altogether if I had gone away; do you think you can match it?"

"Oh yes, I think so; that is, I guess I can give you something near enough."

"No! it will have to be the *precise shade*; I could not dream of putting a blanket on poor little 'Clara,' if it was not the exact color of her coat,"

Wishing to get the thing over, I took down another roll and sharply said, this is the nearest I can give you, will it do?

"Oh, my no, that won't do; are you sure you haven't anything amongst all those rolls nearer than that?"

"Quite sure."

But still she was not satisfied and began to poke around with her umbrella. "There what's that? That looks nearer,

let me see it." This made me hot, and I cut her off by saying: "Madam, I guess I know what's in these shelves better than you; and when I say that is the nearest, why it's the *nearest*, that's all.

"Well, then I don't know what I shall do, I have been to every store in this city and can't find a piece of goods in it to make my poor little Clara a blanket. Perhaps you have a remnant, I only want *three-eights of a yard!*"

This information was not calculated in the least to incite me to further efforts in the direction of becoming a "dog clothier," and observing many other customers at the counter—one at least of whom might have come to buy—I let her slide; and with a silent prayer (?) for both her and "poor Clara," I tackled the next and got a "six-quarter."

Women Who Lessen the Chances of Dry-goods Men Ever Seeing the Inside of Heaven.

The house in which I was employed was one of many owned by the same firm, who had their headquarters in the West-end of London; and branch establishments had also been opened in many of the large cities in different parts of England.

In addition to the provincial branches were two of no small magnitude in London—one in the East-end and the other in the North-west. To the latter I had some months before been transferred from the main house, and every day brought some similar change. Sometimes two or three men

would be sent to our house from Liverpool, and at other times three or four would be dispatched from our own ranks to fill vacancies occurring in the Manchester or some other of the many establishments scattered about the country.

It was a rule of the firm when engaging the services of any man, to make him distinctly understand that by entering their employ he did so with a perfect willingness to be changed from one shop to any other under their management, either in London or the provinces; and I, being no exception to the rule had, of course, obtained my situation only after my acquiescence had been given.

Now, I was very comfortable in my then present quarters, and it was with much regret I was informed one morning of the intention to transfer me with two others to the East-end branch. One of the fellows selected to accompany me towards the rising sun, I found upon making inquiries to be Mr. Pole, the "American," and when this fact became known to the members of our club, many were the expressions of sorrow at his departure; for as I have somewhere previously observed, this gentleman, by reason of his large and varied experience and his ability and ever ready willingness to comply with the demands of our chairman, had become one of the most, if not *the* most entertaining of our numbers. But what is to be will be, and that settles it; so making the best of a bad job, we started in to enjoy the comforts and delights offered by our club-room over the "Crown" for what would in all probability prove to be the last time.

It was Friday the unwelcome intelligence had come to us, and as we were to report for business in our less aristocratic

quarters on Monday morning, but one more evening remained for us to spend in the company of our club mates, and you can depend upon it, when I say we did not allow this chance to slip through our fingers.

When Mr. Lane had that evening called the meeting to order, he rose and made the following remarks: Gentlemen, it is with many regrets I have to announce the speedy departure from our midst of three of our number. Not merely on account of the vacant seats they will leave, but by reason of the fact that we are likely to experience much difficulty in getting fellows to occupy them, who will prove themselves to be as interesting and desirable as those quitting them. Particularly is this true of our esteemed friend, Mr. Pole—or as he is better known among us, the "American"—and I cannot speak too highly of the manner in which he has at all times endeavored to not only amuse, but instruct his audiences; as this will be the last opportunity we shall have of listening to him, I, knowing of an intention on the part of several young men here to-night to shortly emigrate to the United States, shall again impose upon our friend's good nature by asking him to relate a few more of his experiences gathered from that country.

At the conclusion of our chairman's remarks, such a roar of applause went up from every throat in the room, that the only thing I wonder at is, our ears were left in a condition to hear anything more that evening; fortunately however, mine at least received no injury and I was able to listen to the last of these "yarns" and "facts." As soon as sufficient quietness to allow his being heard had been obtained, the "American" stood up and in a few well-chosen words, thanked the friends

he was so soon to part from for the very enthusiastic manner his name had been received for the last time in their club-room, then began: Our worthy chairman has just disclosed the intention of some here to-night to shortly go west; to these my remarks will be chiefly addressed. In the first place, do not for a moment suppose all you have to do to make a fortune is to set your feet in the country and gather it off the streets at your leisure; for by so doing, you are liable to great disappointment; no my friends; in America as in England, or anywhere else, if you are poor and would be rich, you must use both your wits and your hands to obtain your desire. Further than this, do no not allow yourself to become imbued with the idea, that your services would be such a great acquisition to any house fortunate enough to hire you, that they will create a struggle between rival employers, each and every one anxious to get the first chance of obtaining them, upon learning of the arrival at the wharf of the steamship in which you have taken passage. If any such ideas have taken possession of your minds, dispel them at once for it is better to go into a new country, knowing that if it is work you are after, you will have to get up and look for it and not wait for it to come and find you.

The third piece of advice I would offer to you is this: If your finances are in such a condition that they will not permit you to go further west than New York or some of the other large cities in the east, stay where you are; for take my word for it, you are better off than you would be if you went to New York with insufficient money to take you farther west. I have been there three times, and upon each occasion looked for employment. What do you suppose they

offered me? "Seven to twelve dollars a week, to live out." A man in London earning £60 a year besides his P. M.'s, is infinitely better off, as he has no *actual* expenses excepting those of clothes and washing; I would, therefore, impress upon your minds the error of going to America if you do not intend to go into the far west. I have related to you many incidents of American female character met with in the dry-goods stores of that country, but I hope none of these will have the effect of deterring any of you from making your intended visit; for believe me, if you want to see the world, get out and see it while you are young—remembering always that it is the best school for a young man to be educated in.

Now, I shall take it for granted that no one among you having heard the narratives related by me, is coward enough to allow them to knock the idea of speedy emigration out of his head; and this being the case, I will recount for your edification a few more yarns descriptive of another obnoxious species of females met with—thank God, not very frequently—in the American trade.

This woman enters a store expecting to find therein nothing but slaves to do her bidding. America can say what she pleases upon the subject of "equality," but the class of women I am about to speak of is a living proof of the fallacy of the theory. Why, my God, I have actually seen women bounce into a store, and snapping their fingers at the first clerk they see—not even waiting for him to address them—cry out, "come here, you," in much the same tone they would use towards a dog. And too often is it the case that the unfortunate clerk, through the force of circumstances, has to obey her after the manner of a cur. And why is this?

I will tell you: It is because the woman, acting in such a brutal way, "has usually more money than the clerk," and "always more money than breeding."

I remember such a woman who had lived in a Kansas town nearly all her married life. She had emigrated there with her husband from some point in the East, to settle on a Government claim. Years rolled on, and what the Yankees call a "boom," struck the town near which their land was located. Now a boom, when it once strikes a place, is remarkably active, and in a very short space of time the "claim" became a part of the city itself; and land, barely able to raise anything but sunflowers and grasshoppers, was held at a fabulous price. This price at length being offered the owner accepted, built a house on the high-toned residence avenue, and the suddenly enriched family at once take up their position in the society, THE GATES OF WHICH ARE UNLOCKED BY WEALTH RATHER THAN CULTURE. Whenever I saw this woman enter our store, I always had business requiring my immediate attention in some other part of the establishment, for I had soon discovered the kind of craft she was.

One day she sailed in with every stitch of canvas flung to the breeze, and for a wake could be observed a very common place old lady, whom the haughty creature would address as "mother,"—when she could do so without any danger of being overheard. She wanted to look at silks, but as these were kept at the first counter inside the store, it was necessary for her, in order to display her gaudy appearance to those in the rear of the establishment, to pass by, and walking up one aisle as far as she could go, return by the other, and then join her mother at the silk counter.

One of the fellows went forward, and I pitied him, for well I knew he would have a rough "passage."

"Show me some brown silks?" she snapped.

"Yes madam, light or dark brown?"

"Oh I don't know; show me all you've got, and hurry up about it."

The unlucky clerk started in and showed her piece after piece; but of everything he placed before her, she had some cutting remark to make."

"You don't suppose I'd wear a thing like that do you? The very idea; why I wouldn't be seen on the street wearing such common trash—the time had been, when she was glad to wear a twenty-five cent worsted dress—is two dollars a yard the best silk you have?"

"It is in colors, madam; but we have much better grades in black."

"Well then why don't you show them to me? You ought to know these are not good enough for me."

Here her mother ventured to remark: "but my dear its no use of you looking at black, if you want brown. The kind-hearted old lady only got sat upon for her temerity however.

"Well, what if it is? that don't make any difference; let him show them anyway; I guess it won't hurt him."

The amiable clerk took out several pieces of black and at last got her "ladyship" to admit one at four dollars a yard was good enough to adorn even her most important person.

"But I don't wan't it, it's brown I want. I am going to have a dress made over, and wan't some brown silk to go with it; here is a piece of the goods I want to match." And

will you believe it, *this woman actually had a sample which she had not offered to show until she had put the salesman to so much trouble.* When I saw this my blood fairly seethed; and not wishing her any harm, I still hoped she would break her neck before she reached home.

The clerk however, didn't lose his temper but found a perfect match amongst the silks he had already shown her; and pushing the others aside, began to puff it in the usual manner.

"Where is my sample?"

"Here it is madam;" it was such a perfect match in color, that the customer had failed to observe it as it lay upon the piece of silk in front of her.

"Do you call that a good match?"

"Perfect," replied the clerk.

"Well, I don't; but one can't tell anything about it in these dark stores. I believe you keep the light out on purpose to fool people;" and without as much as "by your leave" she grabbed the bolt of silk in her arms and sailed off to the door. In less than a minute she "went about" and was on her way back. When within two or three yards of the counter she deliberately pitched the piece of silk in its direction, intending it, I presume, to light thereon. But whatever might have been her endeavor, certain it is that she missed the counter and down went the silk in a confused mass upon the floor.

Now you can all imagine what a piece of silk containing fifty or sixty yards would look like if allowed to fall; but you can form no conception of the appearance this piece presented when the contemptible woman gathered it up

and bundled it in a heap on the counter. I do not believe there were half a dozen yards in their original folds; and he would be a smart man indeed who could straighten it out in less than fifteen minutes, for not only were the awns disturbed, but hardly a yard of it remained that had not become more or less soiled through coming in contact with the dusty floor.

The mother of this amiable (?) creature gently remonstrated with her for being so careless: "Why Fanny," she said, "why don't you be more careful? See what a lot of trouble you have made the clerk."

"Trouble, indeed. Pooh," she said, "I would like to know what he is paid for, if it is not to take trouble with me?" and biting off a short, "come on" to her "wake," she sailed proudly out of the store, with her "jib" well up to the wind, and her "spanker" run out to its full dimensions.

I could see that the salesman was bursting with fury; but the unfortunate wretch was married, and not one word did he offer by way of resenting the unfeeling insult, for well he knew the result of such a step would in all probability be his discharge.

I will relate another incident of a similar nature; but instead of the woman acting in such a heartless and outrageous mannner, departing in proud stateliness, as the other had done, she left the store completely abashed; having met with a most wholesome rebuke from the courageous girl who had been the victim of her harsh and vulgar spleen.

What I am about to relate, occurred in the last store in which I worked in the United States, in one of the largest cities on the Pacific Coast.

One Saturday night two women, both of whom were known by every clerk in the house, walked in and asked to be shown some cloaks; after giving them seats in the show-room, the floor-walker called a young lady to wait on them. On the saleslady making her appearance she was met by one of the customers, who, calling her by name, drew her to one side and said: "Mrs. Neversweat wants to look at cloaks, but I am almost sure you can't suit her, she is so hard to please.

The young lady wishing to make herself agreeable, smiled at this, and pleasantly remarked: "Oh no she is not; I only wish every customer was as easily suited as Mrs. Neversweat. Scarcely had the words fallen from her lips, when I heard the woman referred to as Mrs. Neversweat, jerk out in insolent tones: "Well I'm sure I don't care whether you think me hard to please or not; *I guess you are here to earn your living by waiting on ladies.*"

Now gentlemen, as I have long ago stated, I am opposed to the employment of females in our business; but when I think of the manner in which this young and beautiful girl treated this unfeeling woman, who, knowing her private circumstances rendered it necessary for her to do something for a living, deliberately made use of the advantage she possessed, by cruelly wounding her feelings; I almost wish I had a better excuse than the one adduced, for holding the views I do.

In an instant the hot blood rushed to her temples, and her great brown eyes shot out the fire of indignation; and I who had seen and heard the whole thing, and knowing something of the girl's high spirit expected to witness

quite a scene. But nothing of a boisterous nature ensued; for the beautiful girl by an heroic effort, kept back the answer such an insult would be likely to call forth; and turning quietly to the heartless wretch—with a face now so white her eyes appeared jetty black by contrast—in a low but firm voice said:

"Yes madam, you are quite right; I *am* here to earn a salary by waiting upon 'ladies.'—with particular emphasis on 'ladies'—but *ladies* are never so unkind as to remind me of it."

It was now Mrs. Neversweat's turn to change color, and I felt as though I ought to applaud the signal victory won by this magnificent girl. You need not stare gentlemen, I repeat she WAS "MAGNIFICENT, AND GRANDLY NOBLE;" for did she not by thus censuring this woman, teach her a lesson, the remembrance of which would be calculated to restrain her from repeating the injury?

Certainly she did; and again I repeat that any girl having the courage to act as this one did, is MAGNIFICENTLY NOBLE. And it is the duty of every man and woman behind the counter to-day, to admire and feel grateful to such heroic women.

Now, those of you intending to emigrate to America can go, knowing at least more than I did of some of the characters you will encounter in the dry-goods stores of that country.

After Mr. Lane had thanked the "American" for his hints and stories of the United States, he looked around the audience for another victim. Your humble servant was singled out, and bowing to the inevitable, proceeded to interest (or weary) the audience. But what I related

will find no place in these pages; it being my intention to reserve it for future use. And now reader, (if you have had the patience to accompany me thus far) good-bye. Some day perhaps I will tell you the story I rehearsed to the members of our club in the comfortable quarters at the "Crown."

THE END.

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